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SKETCHES

OF THE

HISTORY OF LITERATURE,

FROM THE

EARLIEST PERIOD

TO THE

Revival of Letters in the Fifteenth Century.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Indocti discant, ament meminisse periti.

BY WILKINS TANNEHILL.

NASHVILLE:
JOHN S. SIMPSON—DEADERICK-STREET.
1827.

DISTRICT OF WEST TENNESSEE, ss.

Be it remembered, that on this 20th day of June, in the year 1827, and 51st year of American Independence, *Wilkins Tannehill* hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the words following, to wit: "Sketches of the History of Literature, from the earliest period to the revival of letters in the fifteenth century. *Indocti discant ament meminisse periti.* By Wilkins Tannehill." In conformity to an act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing copies of maps, charts, and books, to the proprietors and authors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned;" and also the act, entitled, "an act supplementary to an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned, and extending the benefit thereof to designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

N. A. M'NAIRY, Clerk
Of the District of West Tennessee.

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PREFACE.

THE work now presented to the public is one of humble pretensions, and goes forth unprotected by the patronage of rich and powerful booksellers. Prepared during intervals of occasional leisure from the duties of an employment little congenial with literary pursuits, and without any opportunity for consulting extensive libraries, it aspires only to the character of *sketches*, without pretending to be a complete history. It is an attempt by a "*backwoodsman*" to condense and comprise within a narrow compass, the most prominent and interesting events, connected with the progress of literary and scientific improvement, from the earliest period through a long succession of ages, and amidst a great variety of circumstances. The author is well aware that, from the nature of things, its deficiencies must appear numerous and obvious to the scholar and man of extensive erudition. Many events, no doubt, have been more slightly noticed, than, from their importance, they deserved to be; and some, perhaps equally interesting, have been entirely overlooked. These remarks are made, not for the purpose of averting the arrows of criticism, to which every man who ventures to publish a book must expect to be exposed; but in order fairly to exhibit the true design of the work, and to point out the class of readers for whom it was specially intended. To those who have no opportunity for extensive reading, and who may wish to take a rapid, gen-

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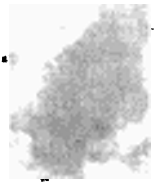
eral survey of the past history of literary improvement, this volume may prove a source of valuable and interesting information, not, perhaps, elsewhere to be found, within so narrow a space. As a book of occasional reference, it may be convenient even to the classical scholar, and to the student who aspires to a minute acquaintance with historical details, it may not be without its use, by affording facilities for reviewing and arranging the knowledge acquired by more extensive research. Such as it is, this volume appears before the public a candidate for patronage and favor, in the hope, that all due and reasonable allowances will be made for its defects, and that its merits will be fairly appreciated, although proceeding from an individual unknown to fame, and issued from the press in the remote interior of the western country.



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INTRODUCTION.

Among the most interesting events in the history of the world, are the rise and progress of literature, its general diffusion, and the influence it has exerted, and still continues to exert, upon the moral, intellectual and political condition of the human race. The influence of literature and science, is well worth the investigation, not only of the philosopher, who enters minutely into the examination of causes and effects, but of every rational and intelligent mind; and its history is no less a subject of interesting pursuit. It is a pleasing employment, when the mind is undisturbed by the cares of the world, or not engaged by more profound studies, to trace its progress through its various ramifications and gradations, its elevations and depressions, from its first rude beginnings, when knowledge was conveyed in symbols and hieroglyphics, to its present "high and palmy state." Like every thing else, dependant upon human exertion for its cultivation and improvement, it has had its seasons of prosperity and glory; and, notwithstanding the inestimable blessings it is calculated to bestow, it has also had its seasons of humiliation and depression.

When we compare the condition of a civilized and enlightened people with that of the wild and untutored savage, whose benighted mind no genial ray of science illumines, the influence of learning is strikingly displayed. In the latter we behold mind in a rude and uncultivated state, rough and unpolished as the most precious of gems, before the hand of the lapidary has removed the external coat which conceals its beauties. Contented with the objects which surround him, and with which he has been familiar from his infancy, the uncultivated man, notwithstanding his native energy of intellect, discovers no great merit in the improvements daily making by his more enlightened neighbours, in the arts which conduce to the comforts and conveniences of life; nor does he discover any extraordinary development of mind in the various improvements and discoveries in the different departments of science. But let these things be explained in a

manner which he can comprehend, and if he is not able, from the peculiar circumstances of his situation, to adopt them in real life, he will be constrained to acknowledge the advantages to be derived from mental cultivation. The influence of learning is obvious also, when we compare the civil and political institutions of a country, where seminaries of learning, unrestrained by arbitrary rules, are supported and encouraged by public and private munificance, and where learning is generally diffused, with those of another where knowledge is limited to a few—where fair science spreads not her cheering beams abroad throughout the land. In the one, the people are generally intelligent, if not learned, and are capable of understanding and properly appreciating their civil and political rights; they are in the peaceful possession of the comforts and conveniences of life, and are contented and happy. In the other, "oppression rules the hour;" the great mass of the people, debased by ignorance and superstition, are poor, wretched and dependant upon the whims and caprices of some petty tyrant, who, "clothed with a little brief authority," exercises it, not for the general good, but for his own private advantage, and to gratify his lust of power.

Seated, as it were, upon a commanding eminence, the lover of learning at the present day, can see what it once was, and what it now is. He beholds many a solitary place made glad by the influence of literature, whilst its gentle and beneficent stream continues to flow and spread, and like the fruitful Nile, fertilizes the soil which would, otherwise, remain a barren waste, or produce only the noxious weeds of error. From this eminence he casts a retrospective glance over the plains and mountains of Greece, "the land of battle and of song," and beholds them as they were in the days of her glory and renown. The venerable groves of the academy and the lyceum rise to his view, where lessons of wisdom once flowed from the lips of a Plato and an Aristotle, and he dwells with enthusiasm upon that proud era of her history, when the streets of Athens were crowded with philosophers, orators, poets and historians, whose genius still throws a splendid light over a country, once the theatre of so many glorious achievements, now, alas! the land of oppression, ignorance and superstition. The banner of Mahomet now waves over her ruined temples, her porticos and her monuments, and but little remains to designate the spot where Athens, unrivalled in literature and unequalled in arts, once stood, the admiration of the world;

> And yet how lovely in thine age of wo,
> Land of lost gods and godlike men! art thou!
> Thy vales of evergreen, thy hills of snow,
> Proclaim thee nature's varied favorite now.
>
> *Lord Byron.*

From the shores of classic Greece, the eye of the observer is next directed to imperial Rome, and rests upon the palaces, the temples, the columns, the triumphal arches, which once adorned the seven hills of the "Eternal City." He contemplates with pleasure, mingled with regret, that bright period in her literary history, distinguished as the *Augustan age*, when the bard of Mantua tuned his pipe upon the banks of the Tiber. He sees before him that illustrious band of literary men who crowded the court of Augustus, and who, supported by his liberal patronage, were enabled to contribute so much to advance the literary reputation of a people, previously distinguished more for deeds of arms, than for the encouragement of letters and learned men. At no antecedent, and at few subsequent periods, were literary men more munificently rewarded, than during the reign of Augustus. He had overcome his political rivals, and upon the ruins of the ancient republic, had erected the imperial throne, contrary to the wishes of the people. Although his power was supported by armed legions, Augustus judged it prudent to adopt other means to gain the people; hence he extended the hand of patronage to the literary men of the day, who repaid his munificence by extolling his virtues and the mildness of his government—thus, in a great degree, reconciling the people to his usurpations of power, and the extinction of their liberties. Of their merits we shall speak hereafter. A few years subsequent to this period witnessed the decline of Roman power and grandeur, and of learning—the Roman capital became subject to the barbarians of the north—the Gothic hordes who disregarded the refinements of civilization, and overturned and trampled upon the elegant productions of Grecian and Roman art.

> The Goth, the Christian, time, war, flood and fire,
> Have dwelt upon the seven-hill'd city's pride;
> She saw her glories star by star expire,
> And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride
> Where the car climb'd the capitol; far and wide
> Temple and tower went down, nor left a site:—
> Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
> O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
> And say, "here was, or is" where all is doubly night!
>
> *Chil. Har. C.* 4. *LXXX.*

The depression of learning, after christianity became the religion of the Roman empire, is as remarkable, as it is difficult to be accounted for, upon any correct system of reasoning. The obvious tendency of the christian religion, when free to act is, not only to shed abroad a knowledge of salvation, and point to the bright realities of another world, but to enlighten and liberalize the mind, making it the receptacle of science. Unfortu-

nately, however, a different spirit prevailed—as soon as the sceptre fell from pagan hands, a persecuting and intolerant spirit pervaded the empire, as a retaliation for the persecutions endured by the christians during the supremacy of pagan power; the pagan schools were closed, and in a short time all the learning of the times was confined to the higher clergy, who were as ambitious of temporal, as they were of spiritual, power. Nothing more clearly marks the spirit of the times, than a formal decree of an ecclesiastical council,* which proscribed and persecuted what was called "pagan learning," that is, the poetry and philosophy of the ancients, and which prohibited even bishops from reading *secular* books. The stores of ancient learning and wisdom were then mouldering in the cells of monasteries, inaccessible to any but illiterate monks, who, in consequence of their ignorance of even the rudiments of learning, were unable to avail themselves of the treasures within their grasp. The whole circle of monkish literature embraced only the legends of saints and the records of the wonderful miracles of holy martyrs. This age of ignorance continued through the long period of twelve centuries, scarcely a gleam of intellectual light breaking through the dark cloud which hung over it. The princes and nobles of those days, who ought to have been its patrons, were too much devoted to war and warlike amusements, to give themselves much concern on the subject of learning; they had no idea that any kind of knowledge, to be derived from books, was requisite to enable them to fill the eminent stations they occupied; they, therefore, left the pursuits of literature entirely to the dignitaries of the church, who alone were thought to have any occasion for learning; and they were interested in not removing the veil of ignorance, that they might maintain that influence they had, unfortunately for the human family, obtained and exercised. About the middle of the eleventh century, a light burst through the surrounding gloom; feeble, indeed, at first, but gradually extending, until about the middle of the fifteenth century, when learning revived, and found patrons and protectors in the munificent house of *Medici*, particularly in *Cosmo de Medici*, and his grandson *Lorenzo, the magnificent*. About this time, also, the art of printing was invented, which, aided by the liberal principles introduced by the reformation, contributed to the general and rapid diffusion of learning. Since then it has continued to flourish in Europe; and having been transplanted into this free and happy country, it has found a congenial soil, where it requires only proper cultivation to bring it to perfect maturity.

In the succeeding pages, we design to present a concise view

* The fourth council of Carthage held A. D. 398.

of the progress of literature. The subject embraces, it is true, an extensive field, one which we have not the vanity to suppose ourselves capable of exploring and fully unfolding. We do not hope, nor do we aim to attract, by any novelty of matter or manner—we design to give a brief sketch of what we consider an interesting subject, more particularly for the benefit of those who have neither leisure nor opportunity to examine the subject more at large.

SKETCHES

OF THE

HISTORY OF LITERATURE.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER I.

Hieroglyphic and Alphabetic writing. Literature of the Egyptians, Hebrews and other eastern nations.

The subject of alphabetic writing, that most important invention, to which we are indebted for the preservation of all learning, has given rise to much able, learned and interesting discussion. It has employed the pens of many profound antiquaries, whose peculiar province it is, to penetrate the veil that covers the transactions of past ages; but, notwithstanding all their researches and ingenious speculations, it is unsettled among the learned, where and when it originated—whether it is of divine origin, or a wonderful effort of human ingenuity and invention.

In a literary point of view, writing is the most important invention with which we are acquainted; as we are thus enabled to communicate our thoughts, our feelings and impressions, to each other, when absent, as well as when present, and to transmit to posterity the record of the great events which, from time to time, agitate the natural, moral and political world, as well as important discoveries and improvements in arts and science. Previous to the invention of letters, the knowledge of the history of nations depended upon the frail memory of man, and was

communicated, from generation to generation, by tradition, or by means of hieroglyphics, which were known only to a few. In consequence of this want of written records, we are entirely ignorant of that race of people, who once inhabited the northern portion of the vast continent of America, and whose remains are at once a striking monument of their power, and of the vanity of all earthly things. Of the purposes for which these mounds or pyramids were erected, we are left entirely to conjecture.

Writing was, at first, in hieroglyphics, or by representations of material objects; thus, the figure of a man was used to express a man—the figure of a tree to express a tree, and so on through all the productions of nature. Thus also, if it were meant to intimate, that a man had been slain by a wild beast, the figure of a man extended on the earth, and the animal standing over him, would be delineated. The origin of hieroglyphic writing has been generally ascribed to the Egyptians; but, whether they are entitled to the honor of the invention or not, their priests deserve the credit of forming it into something like a regular system, by means of which, they were enabled to trace the conceptions and operations of the mind, so as to be perfectly intelligible to each other. The Egyptian priests were a separate class of men, set apart for regulating and conducting religious ceremonies; they had acquired the reputation of superior wisdom, at a time when knowledge was extremely limited, and, with the ambition natural to man, they used every means that ingenuity could devise, to increase their influence with the people. They were closely united among themselves; a singleness of object and design governed and directed their actions, and the sacredness of character with which they were invested, enabled them to accomplish all they desired—obtaining an unbounded influence with every order of society, from the prince to the peasant. In the retirement of their temples, they pursued those researches which rendered them celebrated in other lands; but the particular fruits of their studies were placed beyond the reach of common ken, by the use of hieroglyphic characters, known only to themselves, or such as they thought proper to initiate into a knowledge of their mysteries. On the existing monuments of the ancient Egyptians, which strew the plains of Egypt, hieroglyphic characters abound, and still continue to attract attention, and exercise the ingenuity of travellers. On

the temples and other ruins of Luxore, they look as if but recently cut. "You see them," says the author of Scenes and Impressions in Egypt and Italy, "as Cambyses saw them, when he staid his chariot wheels to gaze up at them; and the Persian war cry ceased before these acknowledged symbols of the sacred element of fire."

Hieroglyphic writing not only prevailed among several ancient nations of the old world, but was even practised by the Mexicans, when their country was invaded by the Spaniards, as appears from the fact, that the inhabitants of the coast, in order to give information to Montezuma of the arrival of strangers, sent him white cotton cloths, on which were delineated figures of ships, horses, artillery and whatever else they had observed remarkable.* It is even practised at the present day among the aborigines of America, as is well known to those who have paid any attention to their manners and customs. The curious will find an illustration of this fact, by consulting "Long's Expedition to the Rocky Mountains," where is preserved a copy of a hieroglyphic record of an Indian battle, as delineated on a buffalo skin.†

Hieroglyphic writing is a difficult, imperfect and unsatisfactory mode of recording events, and the process of delineation laborious. Although, in a certain degree, it answered the purpose for which it was designed, the difficulties attending it must have induced those who practised it, to study some more easy and expeditious method of communicating their ideas; hence, we presume, one improvement succeeded another, until the system of alphabetic writing was invented and adopted. The Egyptian priests, however, long after the invention of letters, continued the use of hieoroglyphics, to conceal their learning and the mysteries of the priesthood, from the profane eyes of the uninitiated, in order to preserve and increase their authority.

With regard to the origin of alphabetic characters, so contrary and insufficient is the evidence, that it is impossible to fix the era of the invention, or ascertain the inventors who are thus deprived of the honors justly due to so important a discovery. The invention has been ascribed to different nations—the Egyptians, the Phœnicians, the Hebrews, the Chaldeans, the Indians,

* Robertson's History of America, vol. 1, p. 396.

† Long's Expedition, vol. 1, p. 159, 296, 449.

the Arabians, have each set up their claims, and each have had their advocates, who have urged their respective pretensions with great ingenuity, learning and ability.

The Greeks ascribed the invention to *Cadmus*, a Phœnician, who first made known the use of the alphabet in Greece; it then consisted of but sixteen letters, the rest having been added at subsequent and distant periods. Those who urge the claims of the Hebrews, say, that the Greeks confounded the Phœnicians with the Hebrews, in consequence of similarity of language, and that when they spoke of the Phœnician alphabet, they really meant the Hebrew. We think there is but little ground for the opinion, that Cadmus was the inventor of alphabetic writing; the honor of having accommodated the Phœnician or Hebrew characters to the Greek language, is all that he may fairly be considered entitled to; and this is no small honor—it shows him to have been one who possessed at least some of the learning of the times, and was willing to share it with others. The Egyptians, Phœnicians and Chaldeans, were neighboring nations, differing but little in their manners, customs and religion, and very similar in language. Their intercourse with each other favored the reciprocal communication of the knowledge possessed by each; so that it is difficult to decide which received the knowledge of letters from the other. To the Egyptian god *Thoth*, who is the same with the Phœnician *Thaut*, who is also the *Hermes* of the Greeks and *Mercury* of the Romans, the Phœnician historian *Sanchoniathon* ascribed the invention of letters. To him also it is ascribed by *Diodorus Siculus*.

The claim of the Indians is thought by some modern writers, to be entitled to great weight; but they have probably rested their opinions more upon the proud claims of the Hindoo writers to high antiquity, than any strict and close examination of a subject of so much intricacy. The Sanscrit, a polished and elegant tongue, but which has now ceased to be a living language, is supposed to be the root of almost every dialect, from the Persian gulf to the Chinese sea, thirty-two of which have been recognised and distinguished by the missionaries of Serampore. The Hindoos assert, that their ancient books describe the Egyptians and other ancient nations, as seeking amongst them that information their own country could not afford.

This uncertainty, with regard to the invention of alphabetic

characters, by any particular nation, has induced the opinion, that it is not a human invention, but of divine origin, and was delivered by God himself to his chosen people. The opinion is supported by the following arguments: 1st. The high antiquity of the use of letters; the Hebrew characters having existed when Moses composed the Pentateuch, (1450 years before Christ,) at which time it appears they were in as perfect a state, as in the days of Jewish splendor and glory. 2d. The similarity between the various alphabets of different nations, which, for the most part, are the same in order, power and even form of their letters, with the Hebrew. 3d. The complete want of alphabetic characters among those nations which have been cut off from all communication with the ancient civilized world. 4th. The difficulty of the invention, considering the rude state of society at the time it must have been accomplished.* The arguments here stated, if they are not conclusive as to the origin of alphabetic writing, are at least plausible. One thing, however, we think may be regarded as certain, from various passages in the sacred volume, namely, that alphabetic writing existed before the delivery of the law to Moses; and if delivered by God himself, must have been delivered long antecedent to this time. Thus we find in the 17th chapter of Exodus, "the Lord said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in a book;" which direction was given before the law was delivered from Mount Sinai, and of course implies that writing was known before that time, the period at which its original delivery to man is assigned by some who contend for its divine origin. Although it is probable, that alphabetic writing is of divine origin, and delivered to some of the descendants of Adam, long before the time of Moses, yet, as we find no mention made of this circumstance in the sacred volume, the oldest record extant, we incline to the opinion, that it is of human invention, and was a natural consequence arising from the improvement of hieroglyphic or picture writing; and that Moses, who is said to have been "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," carried it with him out of Egypt.

Letters were originally written from the right hand towards the left, and without any of the stops and divisions practised in

* Edin. Ency. art. Alphabet.

modern writing. This mode prevailed among the Assyrians, Phœnicians, Hebrews, Chaldeans and Arabians, and is still practised among the nations of the East. This mode also obtained, originally, among the Greeks, as it is very natural it should, if they received their knowledge of alphabetic writing from the Phœnicians. They afterwards adopted the method of writing from right to left, and from left to right, alternately, which continued until about the time of Solon, when the method of writing from left to right was finally adopted. The Greek alphabet, as before remarked, is undoubtedly of Phœnician origin, and consisted of but sixteen letters; to these, Palemedes, son of Nauplius, king of Euboea, about the time of the Trojan war, added four, and the poet Simonides, who lived in the time of Hipparchus, the son of Pisistratus, added four more. From the Greek alphabet, all the alphabets in use in modern Europe, have been derived.

The materials first used for writing, were the leaves or inner bark of trees, afterwards linen, and tables covered with wax. About the time of Alexander the Great, paper first began to be manufactured from the Egyptian plant called papyrus, (*Cyperus papyrus.*) This plant has several coats, one above another, like the coats of an onion, which being separated by a sharp instrument, and moistened with water, were put under a press and afterwards dried in the sun. Besides these several preparations, parchment, made of the skins of goats, was also used, which continued in use, until the invention of paper from cotton by the Arabians, A. D. 706. In the thirteenth century, paper manufactories were established in the christian kingdom of Castile; and in the fourteenth century, the knowledge of the art found its way into Italy, after which time paper, manufactured from cotton and linen, came into general use. The long time which elapsed before the introduction of paper among the christians of Europe, affords a strong evidence of the low state of learning in the christian world. Had there been much zeal in the cause, a discovery so valuable would not have been so long neglected; for such was the scarcity of materials for writing, that many valuable ancient manuscripts were erased, to make way for the puerile productions of monkish superstition.

The ancient form of a book, was usually that of a roll, formed of several leaves of parchment, or paper made of papyrus,

fastened together. When a book or volume was finished, a ball of wood, bone or horn, was affixed to it on the outside for security, as well as ornament, when the book was rolled. The custom of writing in continued sheets, and putting them up in a roll, was practised by almost all nations of antiquity, differing, however, in this, that in some the writing was continued across the sheets, while in others the sheets were divided into columns. Among the Romans the method of dividing a book into pages, like our books, was not practised until the time of Julius Cæsar, who adopted it on his letters to the senate. The internal arrangement of books varied also in different countries and at different periods. At first letters were only separated by lines, and it was long before they were separated into individual words; on which account the utmost care was necessary to guard against errors. The Jewish writers never divided a word, so as to place a part in one line, and a part in another—they, therefore, enlarged some of their letters, so as to fill up the blank spaces; these letters are distinguished by the name of final letters. The division of the sacred books, into chapters and verses, is a modern invention.*

Egypt is said to be the source whence we have derived all our knowledge; the spot whence learning and science was diffused over Europe. Egypt was long celebrated for the uninterrupted enjoyment of peace, so necessary to the prosperity of a country, in the accumulation of wealth and all the conveniences of life, and so favorable to the cultivation of the peaceful arts, and the different branches of learning. Their system of government, although monarchical and hereditary, was well devised to render the people contented and happy. Their princes, so far from being arbitrary and despotic, were under equal, if not greater restraint, than their subjects, arising from that salutary law which subjected their conduct to close examination after death, and a denial of the rights of sepulture and of funeral honors, if they were found guilty of any thing that would reflect dishonor on their memory.† This salutary regulation, maintained by the priests, and supported by the force of public opinion, operated as a powerful restraint upon the abuse of power, and established that sort of connexion between prince

* Adams' Rom. Ant., Kennet's Rom. Ant., Brown's Ant. of the Jews.
† Rol. Anc. Hist. vol. 1, p. 157, 171.

and people, calculated to inspire mutual confidence—a state of things seldom existing where the sovereign is absolute, and unrestrained by written laws.

Notwithstanding the great reputation of the Egyptians, as regards literature and science, which was not confined to the countries watered by the Nile, but extended into more remote and distant quarters, the state of learning among them, as a people, has been much overrated; so much are we in the habit of receiving as true, that which has long been asserted without contradiction. The mass of the people were not more enlightened in the ways of knowledge, than some of their neighbors, who have never acquired so high a reputation. Whatever learning was among them, was confined to the priests, by whom it was guarded with scrupulous care, as unfit to be communicated to vulgar minds. By this concealment of their knowledge, they were enabled to maintain that influence over the people they had long exercised, and which they were unwilling to lose. Priestcraft, in all ages, has been the same, seeking to perpetuate ignorance, rather than remove the film from the mental eye. Notwithstanding the fame they have acquired, and their boast of being the inventors of alphabetic writing, no works of Egyptian philosophers, poets or historians, have come down to us, by which we can estimate the extent of their philosophical researches, their critical acumen, their taste or skill in poetry, the style of their oratory, or their historical compositions. Whatever works of literature and science they may have possessed, have perished, and their authors are no more remembered, than the founders of pyramids, so long one of the seven wonders of the world, and still the admiration of travellers who stop to contemplate these stupendous monuments of human labor and industry. The only information we possess, with regard to the literary attainments of the Egyptians, their knowledge of the arts and sciences, is derived from the sacred writers, and the imperfect accounts of the Grecian historians and philosophers, who were induced, by the high reputation of their priests, to travel to that country in pursuit of knowledge. Thus Pythagoras and Plato, both celebrated as philosophers, were initiated into all the learning of the priesthood, on which they set a high value, and subsequently taught in their respective schools of Athens and Crotona.

The Egyptian priests, in addition to their reputation for learning, were distinguished for extraordinary sanctity, which obtained for them a great influence with the people, and a considerable share in the management of civil affairs. At fixed hours they celebrated the praises of their gods; in the intervals of which, their time was employed in mathematical studies, or scientific pursuits. They concealed the mysteries of religion and learning from the common people, by means of that hieroglyphic, or symbolic method of writing, we have already mentioned. The philosophy of the Egyptians, as taught by their priests, consisted of two kinds—the one addressed to the common people, which was called the *exoteric*, and contained the principles of their public religious creed; the other, which was communicated to a select number intended for the priesthood, in a secret and mysterious manner, was called the *esoteric*. The exoteric doctrines of philosophy or religion, inculcated the most absurd and irrational superstition, and the worship not only of gods, heroes and eminent men, but different animals, and even the productions of the vegetable kingdom. Juvenal, in his 15th satire, thus speaks of the Egyptian superstitions:

Quis nescit, volusi Bythenice, qualia demens
Ægyptus portenta colat? Crocodilon adorat
Pars hæc; illa pavet saturam serpentibus Ibin.
Effigies sacri nitet aurea Circopitheci,
Dimidio magicæ resonant ubi Memnone chordæ.
Atque vetus Thebe centum jacet obruta portis.
Illic cæruleos, hic piscim fluminis, illic
Oppida tota canem venerantur, nemo Dianam;
Porrum et cepe nefas violare, ac frangere morsu.
O sanctas gentes, quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis
Numina,

Who knows not to what monstrous gods, my friend,
The mad inhabitants of Egypt bend?
While *these* the Ibis as a god enshrine,
Those think the crocodile alone divine;
Others where Thebes' vast ruins strew the ground,
And shatter'd Memnon yields a magic sound,
Set up a brute of uncouth shape
And bow before the image of an ape!
Thousands regard the hound with holy fear,
Not one Diana; and it 's dangerous here,
To violate an onion, or to stain
The sanctity of leeks, with tooth profane.
Oh holy nations! sacro-sanct abodes
Where every garden propagates its gods.

Gifford.

Doctrines so absurd and irrational, were not calculated to enlarge the mind, elevate the feelings, or give, indeed, any idea of that supreme intelligence which governs the world. The *esoteric*, or secret doctrine, inculcated a much more rational philosophy, although much at variance with the sublimer systems of modern times. It taught that matter was the first principle of all things, and that before the regular forms of nature arose, an eternal chaos had existed, which contained, in a state of darkness and confusion, all the materials of future beings. Besides this material principle, it admitted also, an active principle, or intelligent power, eternally united with the chaotic mass, by whose energy the elements were separated and bodies formed, and which continually presided over the universe, and is the efficient cause of all effects. With respect to the human soul, although their opinions are differently represented, it is generally agreed, that the priests taught that it was immortal; and whilst some writers assert, that they believed and taught the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, others maintain that they inculcated the more fanciful notion, that the souls of good men, after wandering for a time among the stars, were permitted to return to the society of the gods. The doctrine of the transmigration of souls, taught in the Pythagorean school, was no doubt received from the Egyptian priests.*

The Egyptians, at a very early period, possessed considerable skill in some species of manufactures; as we learn, that even in the days of the Patriarchs, they wore fine linen and golden ornaments; Joseph is described as being thus arrayed; and the sacerdotal garments of the Hebrew priesthood, and the inner hangings of the tabernacle, were made of fine linen dyed, and embroidered with gold. Husbandmen, shepherds and artificers, formed three classes held in great esteem; and as no profession was regarded as mean, which in any manner conduced to the comforts and conveniences of life, the arts received that encouragement which raised some of them to a considerable degree of perfection, notwithstanding that remarkable law which compelled a son to pursue the occupation of his father. This law, although it enabled artists to become more expert in employments which they exercised from their infancy, nevertheless operated as a

* Enfield's Hist. of Philos. vol. 1. p. 88, et seq.; Roll. Anc. His. vol. 1, p. 108.

barrier to invention, by cramping the genius, and confining it to a single object. Rollin calls it a wholsome institution, which extinguished irregular ambition, and taught every man to sit down contented with his own condition, without aspiring to one more elevated, from interest, vain glory or levity. Accustomed as we have been, to reverence the opinions of learned and distinguished men, we beg leave to dissent from an opinion as unphilosophical as unwise. We can see nothing wholesome in an institution, which confines a man to one employment, to the pursuit of a single object during a whole life. Had such a law been adopted in all nations, where would have been the march of improvement? Where would have been the great and manifold improvements and discoveries which have been made in the various departments of the arts and sciences? Were the most learned and enlightened of the ancient philosophers permitted to revisit this world, the wonderful changes which literature, science and art have made in its condition, would strike him with wonder and astonishment. The application of steam to the various purposes of commerce, manufactures and domestic economy, would alone be sufficient to establish, not only the propriety, but necessity, of permitting the free exercise of genius, and prove the impolicy of the law of Egypt.

The architecture of the Egyptians was massy and solid, but it had no beauty of design, or elegance of execution, to attract the admiration of beholders; it was not to be compared with the light and tasteful style of Grecian architecture. From this censure we ought, perhaps, to except their obelisks, which are quadrangular pillars, or pyramids of stone, covered with hieroglyphical inscriptions. Two of these were conveyed from Egypt at great expense, and now adorn the city of Rome. The ruins of ancient Thebes, the city of a hundred gates, present the most strking monuments of Egyptian architecture, wherewith to gratify the curiosity of the traveller and the antiquary—monuments covered with hieroglyphics "which look alike upon the learned and unlearned, with a bright and mocking distinctness, awakening curiosity, exercising the fancy, but, after all, defying the understanding." In what is called the fine arts, sculpture and painting, if they possessed genius and skill in execution, they were destitute of taste; their statues were without due proportion, grace or elegance of figure; they were in no degree worthy

to be placed in competition with the finished productions of Phidias and Praxitelles. Their paintings were in no better style of execution than their statuary, nor does history record the names of any distinguished painters.

However deficient we may regard the taste of the Egyptians in architecture, sculpture and painting, they possessed considerable knowledge of many of the physical sciences, and to them we are indebted, at least, for the principles, upon which they are founded. Geometry, now so important a branch of mathematics, and so essential to constitute an accomplished scholar, originated with them, and was, at first, nothing more than the simple process of measuring lands and establishing their boundaries, after the landmarks had been swept away by the inundations of the Nile. From such simple beginnings has resulted a science, which has become, in the progress of society, highly important to mankind, particularly to astronomers, architects, engineers, and others, who, without its knowledge, would be unable to turn many of their discoveries and observations to advantage.

The science of astronomy, that sublime science by which we are enabled to read the Creator in the glories of the heavens; to discover the order and harmony which pervade the motions of the heavenly bodies; to ascertain their respective stations and revolutions, is supposed by some, to have originated with the Egyptians, whilst others attribute it to the Chaldeans. Whether it originated with the former or not, it is on all hands agreed, that they made many important discoveries in this interesting science. Placed under a serene sky, and in open plains, where nothing intercepted their view of the heavens, they were enabled to make more extensive and profound researches into the nature of the heavenly bodies, and ascertain with tolerable correctness, their respective motions. They are said to have understood the cause of eclipses, and even the method of calculating them; they divided the year into twelve months, which they afterwards computed at three hundred and sixty-five days. The rudiments of our present system of astronomy, Pythagoras derived from Egypt. He taught it in his school at Crotona; but during the many centuries of mental darkness which pervaded Europe, it was neglected and forgotten, until revived by the genius of Copernicus.

The study of astronomy, sublime and beautiful as it is, gave rise to the science of astrology, (if science it may be called,) which professes to discover certain connexions subsisting between the motions and relative positions of the celestial bodies, and the affairs of this globe; and taught that the rising and setting, the conjunctions and oppositions of the planets, exercised a powerful influence over the destinies of man. This science was practised by the Chaldean, as well as Egyptian philosophers, but was carried to the greatest extent by the former, by whom it was held in the highest estimation, and regarded as a science most worthy of study and cultivation. Astrology afterwards travelled to Rome, where even the learned and enlightened Cicero, ranked among his friends two celebrated astrologers; and so great a hold did it subsequently take upon the minds of men, that it was condemned by the christian fathers and councils, as the invention of the devil. Astrology, however delusive in itself, has been useful in promoting the knowledge of astronomy, as alchemy, its kindred science, in endeavoring to discover the philosopher's stone, and the elixir of life, has been the cause of many important discoveries in chemistry.

The origin of medicine as a science, is also ascribed to the Egyptians; but, according to Diodorus Siculus, instead of prescribing according to his own judgment and experience, every physician was obliged to follow a certain written system, and if, in adhering to it, he proved unsuccessful, he was free from blame; if he ventured to depart from it, though the patient recovered, the physician forfeited his life. By adhering to a system so perfectly absurd and ridiculous, no improvement could be expected, and no man, however great his talents, could ever hope to be distinguished from the crowd of empirics, who imposed upon the ignorance of the multitude.

From what we are able to gather from the works of those who treat of the ancient history of the Egyptians, it may be remarked with justice, that with all their high pretensions to literature, they suffered themselves to be deceived by interested men under the sacred garb of the priesthood, while gross superstition, in matters of religion, by enslaving the minds of men, prevented them from following the dictates of reason.

The children of Israel were the chosen and favored people of God, and were essentially different in manners, customs and re-

ligion from those by whom they were surrounded. Whilst every other nation and people, were enveloped in the clouds of idolatary, and were offering sacrifices to gain the favour of unknown Gods, they alone possessed a knowledge of the true God. During their long sojourn in the land of Egypt, they kept themselves a distinct people, observing the peculiar customs and practising that system of religion, which had been preserved for ages, uncorrupted by the idolatrous and superstitious worship perpetually before their eyes. The same striking circumstances marked their character during their wanderings, and after their final establishment in the land of promise, when their nation grew into a prosperous and flourishing empire, under the sway of David and Solomon. At the present day, the same peculiarity of customs and religion distinguish this extraordinary people, whether they live under a free or despotic, a christian, mahometan or pagan government—they are the living monuments of the truth of the holy writings, and of that inspiration which filled the minds, and guided the pens of the prophets of the Lord.

It has been correctly remarked by a learned and elaborate writer, that "a better and more certain judgment of the ancient Hebrews cannot be formed, than from the monuments which they themselves, or their descendants, have left in the sacred scriptures."* Considered without reference to their inspiration —merely as literary productions—as a record of events which have occurred in the ancient world, and as developing the political and religious opinions and institutions of the Jews, they stand the most splendid monuments of ancient learning. They are unparalleled in the history of literature, for grandeur and energy of expression, and sublimity of style, while they exhibit the most sublime and comprehensive system of ethics, ever offered to the consideration of man, until the coming of Christ, who more distinctly brought life and immortality to light. The most profound of the ancient philosophers who adorned the academic groves of Athens, and who poured forth their wisdom to admiring crowds, never equalled them in their morality; nor have the most celebrated of modern writers been able to attain their energy and sublimity of style and language.

The Hebrew language, according to the opinions of these

* Enfield's Hist. of Philos. vol. 1, p. 37.

who are critically conversant with it, seems well suited to that forcible and energetic mode of expression, which so peculiarly distinguishes the Hebrew writings. Its words are concise, yet expressive, derived from a small number of roots, yet without the studied and artificial composition of the Greek and Latin languages; its words follow each other in an easy and natural order, without intricacy or transposition, and, above all, has the richest fecundity in verbs, of any known tongue, either ancient or modern. Hence, we may attribute that remarkable style of composition, peculiar to Hebrew writers, to the nature and construction of the language itself, as well as to the sublime ideas they were accustomed to entertain of the Divine Being, which, apart from inspiration, has the obvious tendency to enlarge the mind and elevate the feelings. The Jews assert, that their language is the original language, taught by God himself to Adam, and by him transmitted to his posterity. This, however, is controverted, and similar claims put in by other nations, whose advocates have labored with much zeal and ingenuity, to establish their respective pretensions.

In Hebrew literature, other subjects of controversy exist, in which much learning has been employed, namely, with regard to the particular character in which the sacred books were originally written, and with regard to the vowel points. As to the first it is still unsettled, and must remain so, whether the sacred books were originally written in the present square character, or in the old Phœnician, now called the Samaritan; much learning and diligent investigation has been displayed on both sides. After an examination of the subject with some care, so far as our limited means of information would permit, we are inclined to adopt the opinion, that the sacred books were originally written in the Phœnecian or Samaritan character, and that the present character was not employed until the return of the Jews from captivity, when Ezra, finding that they had, in a great measure, disused their ancient character, found it requisite to have the sacred books transcribed in the Chaldee, a character with which they had become familiar, from their long residence in Babylon.

The second subject alluded to, namely, the vowel points, is of more importance, because the insertion or omission of a point sometimes gives a different meaning to a word. This contro-

versy rests upon the question, whether they were originally employed by the sacred writers, or whether they are of modern invention. The vowel points were universally deemed of equal antiquity with the Hebrew character itself, until the beginning of the sixteenth century, when *Levita*, a learned Jew of Germany, ventured to call their authenticity in question, and ascribed their invention to a set of Jewish critics, called *Mazorites*, who flourished about five hundred years after Christ, at Tiberias in Gallilee, and who devoted themselves to a revisal of the Hebrew text; and, in order to prevent any future alterations, numbered the sections, words and letters in each book. The points are hence called the Mazoretic points.

For and against, the antiquity and authenticity of the points, many learned Hebrew scholars have employed their talents and critical acumen, but like most other subjects of controversy the contest continues, and in one university the Hebrew language is taught with points, while in another it is taught without. It is agreed by all that, since the time of the captivity, the Hebrew has become a dead language, and like the Greek and Latin, its true and original pronunciation has been lost. To restore this original pronunciation, was one of the objects, it is said, of the Mazoritic critics, in the invention and use of the vowel points. To prove that the points were coeval with the consonants, and were written along with them in the original copies of the sacred scriptures, and that they were not invented by the Mazorites, it is alleged, that it is impossible to pronounce the language without vowels, so it would be impossible to teach it, unless the vowels were expressed—that if the present vowel points are not of the same authority with the consonants, but merely of human and late invention, it will greatly weaken the authority of the holy scriptures, and leave the sacred text to an arbitrary and uncertain reading and interpretation—that there is no mention made in any Jewish writer of such alteration, or addition being made in the Hebrew bible—that all the annotations or notes of the Mazorites upon the vowels relate to their irregularity—that had they been the inventors of the points, they would not have made them irregular, according to their own judgments, and that there is express mention of the points or vowels, in books more ancient than the Talmud—books written before the time of our Saviour.

On the other side, it is argued, that the vowel points were unknown to the seventy who translated the scriptures, about two hundred and eighty years before Christ, in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt. If, therefore, it is said, the Hebrew manuscripts at the time of the seventy were unpointed, or, if they were pointed in a manner different from that mode of pointing which has come down to us, the high antiquity, and of course, the authority, of the present vowel points is destroyed, and will reduce the invention to a period subsequent to the septuagint translation. In support, also, of this opinion, it is said that Origen, who lived in the third, and St. Jerome, who lived in the fourth century, and were both well skilled in Hebrew, make no mention of vowel points; the latter expressly asserts that the manner of reading the Hebrew was unfixed in his time. St. Jerome devoted much of his time to the study of Hebrew literature, having spent more than twenty years, solely for the purpose of attending the schools of the most celebrated Jewish teachers, and conversing with the most intelligent Jews on the subject of their language, and the meaning of their sacred writings. Another remarkable fact is, that the Jews have never suffered the manuscripts which are preserved in their synagogues, for the purposes of religious worship, to be disfigured with points. Such is the substance of the principal arguments for and against the authority and authenticity of the vowel points. The reader who is desirous of examining this subject more at large, is referred to Calmet's Dictionary of the Bible, Wilson's Hebrew Grammar, and Brown's Antiquities of the Jews.

The opponents of the vowel points have adopted a method of reading which certainly recommends itself for its simplicity; that is, by supplying a short *a* or *e* between the consonants. The vowels thus supplied facilitate the pronunciation, which can be acquired in a very short time, and retained with very little practice, whereas the Mazoritic points are complex and difficult.

The first and most celebrated of the Hebrew writers of whom we have any certain knowledge, is *Moses*, who composed the Pentateuch, about 1450 years before the birth of Christ. Moses was brought up in the court of Pharaoh, and was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and is said to have had a per-

fect knowledge of all the sciences then known. At forty years of age he left the court of the Egyptian king, where he was surrounded by the blaze and splendor of royalty, and seeking the land of Midian, he married Zippora, the daughter of Jethro, priest of Midian, and became an humble shepherd, tending the flocks of his father in law. From this humble condition, he was called to be the law-giver and judge of God's chosen people, and their leader from the house of bondage to the promised land. In the retirement of the land of Midian, while pursuing the peaceful occupation of a shepherd, he is supposed to have written by divine inspiration, the book of Genesis, which embraces a period of twenty-three hundred and sixty-nine years, from the creation of the world, and which contains the only authentic account of the great work of creation. It was at this time also, he is supposed to have written the book of Job; a book which yields to none in the sacred volume, for grand and sublime conceptions, and language at once energetic and abounding with the most pure and exalted precepts af morality. With regard to authorship of the book of Job, the subject is stated and examined at some length and with much learning, in the preface to Dr. Clark's commentary on the book of Job. In addition to the sacred books, which are on all hands acknowledged to be the work of Moses, he is said to have written several other works, not now extant, from which Pythagoras and Plato are supposed to have drawn, a great part of their respective doctrines. This opinion, however, is one which originated with the philosophers of the Alexandrian school, for the purpose, no doubt, of gaining credit for the doctrines they taught, which were a mixture of the Jewish and Christian philosophy, with that of the philosophers of Greece.

It is unnecessary to enter into a detailed account of the sacred writers after Moses, or a minute examination of their particular merits, as their works are, or ought to be, familiar to our readers. Among the most distinguished, however, are David, Solomon and the prophets. The authorship of the psalms is generally ascribed, exclusively, to David, who has been emphatically styled the "sweet psalmist of Israel." There are, however, some writers among the ancient Greek and Roman fathers, who contend, that the psalms are not the production of a single individual, but of several. St. Athanasius reckons but

seventy-two psalms, out of one hundred and fifty, which have been pronounced canonical, as the work of David, and the same number is ascribed to him by Eusebius, bishop of Cæsaria.

Although the whole collection of psalms may not have been written by David, we have sufficient evidence, that the greater portion were composed by him. Warmed by a spirit of devotion, and animated by the most exalted sentiments of the wisdom and perfections of the great Creator, he poured forth his prayers in the most sublime poetry: "The Lord reigneth," says he, "let the earth rejoice; let the multitudes of the isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are around about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world; the earth saw and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory." Sublime as are some of the descriptions of Homer, the father of epic poetry, they fall far short of the majesty and grandeur of the royal psalmist. In the psalms there is a peculiarity of style and language that interests the imagination whilst it improves the heart. "Other poetry," says Steele, "leads us through flowery meadows, or beautiful gardens, refreshing with cooling breezes or delicious fruits, soothes us with the murmur of waters or the melodies of birds, or else conveys us to the court or camp; dazzles our imagination with crowns and sceptres, embattled hosts, or heroes shining in burnished steel; but sacred numbers seem to admit us into a solemn and magnificent temple; they encircle us with every thing that is holy and divine; they superadd an agreeable awe and reverence to all those pleasing emotions we feel from other lays, an awe and reverence that exalts whilst it chastises; its sweet authority restrains each undue liberty of thought, word and action; it makes us think better and more nobly of ourselves, from a consciousness of the great presence we are in, where saints surround us, and angels are our fellow worshippers."* In modern times, praise is often bestowed on rank and title which is only due to merit; and thus we frequently find, that men enjoy a celebrity in the literary world, on account of their elevated rank, which is denied to superior genius in humble life. This

* Guardian No. 51.

remark, however, will not apply to David, who wielded the sceptre of a then powerful nation, and was surrounded by all the splendor of royalty. His superior endowments commanded the admiration of his subjects, yet more than his regal state, and while posterity acknowledges his claims to the character of a poet of the first order, it acknowledges also, that he possessed the inspiration of a prophet, and was the "anointed of the God of Jacob." The psalms were collected by Esdras, according to a tradition prevailing among Hebrews and Christians.*

Among the wise men of the Jews, the first rank, by universal consent, has been assigned to *Solomon*, the son of David. In the books attributed to him, we discover the same sublimity of conception, the same energy of language, the same commanding eloquence, that distinguish the other sacred writers, and designate one to whom "wisdom and knowledge" had been granted. The writings of Solomon display extensive knowledge of the ways of men, and a superior degree of moral wisdom; they inculcate doctrines and opinions with regard to the conduct of men worthy of all acceptation, and which could only proceed from a mind preeminently enlightened. That he was well skilled in the sciences then known and cultivated, we have no doubt; but we have not been able to discover that profound knowledge in them respectively, which have been ascribed to him. We regard him rather as a great moral teacher, and endowed with superior wisdom, than as a teacher of natural and physical science. Of the works of Solomon, we have the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. These are generally, if not universally, ascribed to him; the books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, which are attributed to him by some, are denied by others, and being thus of doubtful origin, are placed among the apocryphal books. Besides the above, many other works have been attributed to his pen, on magic, medicine and a variety of other subjects, which have been justly rejected as infamous attempts to impose on the credulity of mankind. It is thought by some, that Aristotle, the celebrated Grecian philosopher, was indebted to some of the works of Solomon, not now extant, for a great portion of that wisdom which gained him so much celebrity, even in modern times. It is easy to advance such an opi-

*Calmet's Dict. of the Bible, art. Psalms.

nion, but it is difficult to prove or disprove it, when authorities for either purpose are unattainable.

The several prophets may, with propriety, be regarded in the list of Hebrew writers. They were the divines, the philosophers, the instructers and the guides of the Hebrews in piety and virtue. They were the organs through which the Almighty thought proper to communicate his will to his chosen people. They generally lived retired, in a sort of community, where they and their disciples were employed in prayer, in labor and in study.* Their sacred character and exemplary conduct, inspired the people with that reverence which is due to the minister of God, and secured an influence never employed by them, but in delivering the will of God, and inculcating the principles of religion and virtue. The writings of the prophets, as well as the other sacred writings, have been remarkably preserved amidst the convulsions of empires and the devastations of war, which have destroyed the works of other ancient writers. The remarkable fulfilment of the prophecies, leaves no room to doubt of their immediate inspiration, and affords the most powerful evidence of the truth of that sublime religion which has brought life and immortality to light—a religion which, when left free to operate, purifies the heart, and fits the soul for the blessed regions of immortal glory.

In the old testament, we have the writings of sixteen prophets, four of whom are distinguished as the greater, and twelve as the lesser prophets. The four greater are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. The twelve lesser are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

In addition to the books considered canonical, Hebrew literature possesses other works. The books of the *Apocrypha*, so called from the Greek word ἀποκρυπτω, "to hide," because of their doubtful origin, were never admitted into the Jewish canon, nor read in the synagogue. Neither are they admitted as canonical by protestant christians, but they, nevertheless, contain many sublime sentiments, and supply many historical facts in relation to the history of the Jews. As literary productions then, they deserve to occupy a conspicuous place in the history of the period to which they belong.

* Calmet's Dict. of the Bible, art. Prophet.

Among the more modern Jewish writers, *Josephus* holds the first place. He was born in Jerusalem, A. D. 37, and was present when that city was taken by the Romans under Vespasian. Having surrendered himself to the conqueror, he gained his esteem and favor by flattering his vanity, and foretelling that he would one day become master of the Roman empire. After the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, he accompanied that conqueror to Rome, where he was admitted to the privileges of a Roman citizen. During his residence there, he employed his time in study, and in collecting and arranging the materials for his celebrated works, "The wars of the Jews" and the "Antiquities of the Jews." These works were composed during the reign of Titus, whose favor and patronage Josephus enjoyed. The "Wars of the Jews" was originally written in Syriac, and afterwards translated into Greek; the "Antiquities" was written in Greek. Besides these works, he wrote some others of minor celebrity. His works are much esteemed as a valuable record of historical facts, so far as his own nation is immediately concerned; but when he speaks of Jesus Christ, and the great and interesting events of his life, he writes with all the prejudices of a Jew, and misapplies some of the most prominent and striking prophecies.

The *Midraschim*, is a work of great antiquity and of high authority. This work, as the name imports, consists of commentaries upon the scriptures. The *Misna*, or *Mishna*, contains the oral law delivered by Moses, first to Aaron and his sons, and then to the seven elders. The Jews believe, that when God gave the written law to Moses, he gave them also another not written, which was preserved among the doctors of the synagogue, until the year A. D. 180, when Judas the Holy, a learned Rabbin, and a chief of the Jews, apprehensive lest the traditions and rites of their fathers might be forgot, in consequence of their dispersion throughout many provinces and countries, thought it better to reduce them to writing, than to trust to their memories. Thus the *Mishna* was compiled, and was received with profound veneration by the Jews, and their learned men made it their principal study. This work is divided into six parts, and contains the whole of their oral laws, and treats of their obligations, sacrifices, and whatever relates thereto. Judas the Holy, the compiler of the Mishna, was the chief of those

doctors or learned men, called Tanaites, or preservers of the tradition, whom they believed enjoyed the peculiar favor of God.

The *Talmud* of Jerusalem, and the *Talmud* of Babylon, are both important works, and esteemed of high authority. The Talmud contains the body of the doctrine, religion and morality of the Jews. That of Jerusalem was compiled about 300 years after Christ, by the Rabbi Johanan, and is composed of the *Mishna*, and the *Gemara*, a commentary upon the Mishna, by Johanna; that of Babylon is composed of the Mishna, and the commentary of Rabbi Asa, who lived at Babylon about 400 years after Christ. The latter was compiled, because that of Jerusalem was considered imperfect, as containing only the opinions of a few of the Rabbins of Jerusalem. The Talmud of Babylon is generally preferred by the Jews to that of Jerusalem, because it is more extensive. Notwithstanding it abounds with miraculous stories, its authority is even preferred by some to that of the scriptures. They believe the traditions contained therein, are derived from God himself, that Moses revealed them to Aaron, to the sons of Aaron, and to the elders of Israel, and that they passed down until they came to the doctors, who reduced them to the form of the Mishna and the Gemara.

The *Targum*, is the Chaldee paraphrase of the written law, as the Talmud is of the oral. It received its origin from the captive Jews of Babylon, whose knowledge of the Hebrew had become so imperfect, that when the Hebrew text was read in the synagogues, Ezra and the other priests, added an explanation or commentary in Chaldee, for the advantage of the people. The explanations and commentaries thus given by Ezra and his successors, were not committed to writing until the time of *Onkelos* and *Jonathan*, who lived about the time of our Saviour. They both composed paraphrases; that of Onkelos is on the books of Moses, and is most esteemed; that of Jonathan, is on the greater and lesser prophets; his style is diffuse, and he often takes great liberties, particularly with the lesser prophets. The parentage of Onkelos is uncertain; by some he is supposed to be a Gentile, who was converted to Judaism; by others, that he was the son of the emperor Titus, and by others, that he was his nephew. His Targum, or paraphrase of the Pentateuch, has always been greatly esteemed by the Jews, and in many copies

of the scripture it was inserted after the original text; the same musical notes were put to it, that it might be read with a kind of chanting at the same time with the original, and to the same tune.* There are several other works of ancient Jews, whose writings were much esteemed, and whose opinions were received with great respect.

Among the ancient nations of the east, the Chaldeans enjoyed a high reputation for learning, and have divided with the Egyptians the honor of originating certain arts and sciences, which modern learning and ingenuity have improved and applied to many useful practical purposes. That they cultivated learning to some extent, at a very early period, is acknowledged on all hands; but it was exclusively confined to the Chaldean, as it was to the Egyptian, priesthood. The public at large received no benefit from the knowledge they possessed, which was rather employed in riveting the chains of superstition, than in enlightening the mind. Their peculiar doctrines were concealed from the profane and uninitiated by means of hieroglyphics, and were only taught to those who were designed for the priesthood. The priests instructed the people in the principles of religion and conducted its ceremonies; they interpreted the laws of the kingdom; they pretended to predict future events by divination; to explain prodigies and interpret dreams, and to avert evils or confer benefits, by means of augury and incantations. Astrology was held in such estimation among them, that a distinct order of men was appointed to make observations upon the heavenly bodies; hence, the appellations of Chaldean and astrologer became, afterwards, synonymous terms. The peculiar principles of their religion or philosophy, the Chaldeans are supposed to have received from a philosopher called *Zoroaster*, a different person, however, from the Persian Zoroaster, but equally renowned as one of the benefactors of the human race. They believed in a God or Supreme Being, the fountain of intelligence by whose providence and care the world is governed, and also in several inferior and subordinate gods, who assisted in the government of human affairs. These gods consisted of the sun, moon, planets and stars, and to them religious homage was offered. The Chaldean priests, like the Egyptian, are supposed to have taught in the retirement of their temples a more sub-

* Calmet's Dict.; Brown's Ant. of the Jews.

lime and rational system of religion, than that taught to the people. Of the writings of the Chaldean sages and philosophers, we can form no opinion, as none remain to satisfy the inquiring mind.

India lays claim to high antiquity as well on the score of learning and philosophy, as to existance as a nation. It is difficult to ascertain at what period the most ancient philosophers and learned men of India flourished, but it is well known that in the most remote times of which we have any knowledge, there existed in that country a race of men, distinguished by the name of Gymnosophists, with whom the present system of Hindoo religion and worship originated. They were divided into sects, tribes or castes, the principal of which was that of the Brahmins, still the chief caste among the Hindoos. These wise men not only distinguished themselves for the cultivation of science, but were remarkable for their rigid abstinence, their contempt of the pleasures of the world, and their uniform austerity of manner. This austerity and contempt for the pleasures of life, and their frequent conversations on divine things, gave a sort of sanctity to their character, and obtained for them an unbounded influence over the people who are accustomed to regard sanctity of character with peculiar reverence. Like the philosophers of whom we have already spoken, they took great pains to conceal their learning and the mysteries of their religion, from the common people, and for the same reason—that they might preserve the influence they had obtained. The Hindoo system of religion and morality is contained in their sacred books, which denounced the heaviest penalties on whoever should reveal their contents to the uninitiated, and it was not until a recent period that any portion of them was translated, and any part of their hidden mysteries revealed. For the interesting information we possess on that subject we are indebted to the exertions of Sir William Jones, who in his zeal to inquire into the secrets of oriental literature, found means to unlock the treasure. The admirers of Hindoo literature assert, that their learned men yielded the palm of learning to scarcely any other of the ancients, and that the more their philosophical works and law books are studied, the more the inquirer will be convinced of the depth of wisdom possessed by authors, many of whom flourished one thousand years before the birth of Christ, according to Hindoo chronology.

The sacred writings of the Hindoos, which they attribute to the gods, are contained in the four vedus. Each vedu consists of two parts, called the munturs and the bramhunus, or prayers and hymns. The complete collection of the hymns, prayers, and invocations belonging to one vedu, is entitled its sunghita. Every other portion of Indian scripture is included under the general head of bramunu. This comprises precepts, which include the religious duties; maxims which explain those precepts; and arguments which relate to theology.

The Hindoos have a great number of law books extant, which embrace a great variety of subjects that would naturally suggest themselves to wise legislators in drawing up a code for the regulation of civil society. But, as their legislators usually united the threefold character of philosopher, priest and lawgiver, their civil and criminal laws were not entirely separated from those concerning religious duties and ceremonies. Many of their laws appear to have been dictated by true wisdom, and a proper regard to the rights of individuals, whilst others are partial and unjust—thus, "If a man deprive another of life, he shall suffer death; but if a brahmin do this he shall be fined." Offences against the brahmins are punished with the utmost severity.

The ancient Hindoos possessed considerable knowledge of various sciences—of their knowledge of astronomy there are still remaining some curious monuments. The works still extant which treat of this science are said to be about sixty, and although they contain many absurdities and extravagant fancies, they manifest high intellectual powers, and much inquiry and observation. They give the circumference and diameter of the earth, which, according to their mode of computation, greatly exceeds the measurement of the astronomers of the present day —they describe the causes of the eclipse of the sun and moon—their appearance during an eclipse—the times of the rising and setting of the planets, and the periods when different planets are in conjunction, and many other particulars of the heavenly bodies.

The Hindoos cultivated poetry as a pleasing relaxation from severer studies, and their philosophers laying aside their grave discussions, laid down certain rules for poetic composition, and reduced it to a system. Like that of other eastern nations, their

poetry abounded in metaphors, often extravagant, but sometimes beautiful. The following description of winter, will serve as a specimen;

"This season, as a king, with the cold winds for his retinue, advances from the Himalayu to conquer the earth—he destroys the pride of the most powerful: the lord of day, filled with fear, takes refuge in the south-east; every morning the shivering wretch, raising his head, seeks him in vain; day, mourning the loss of his lord, constantly wastes away; the water-lily, having lost her beloved, ashamed, hides her head beneath the waters; fire, having lost his energy, retires to the cottage of the poor, covering himself with rags, so that even the starving wretch sets him at defiance.

"The coldness of the water excites the same fears in the mind, as the presence of a serpent; a fire without smoke awakens the same desires as the breast of a female on the mind of the unchaste; the rays of the sun cheer the heart like the birth of a son; the impression of the cold wind on the body, resembles unkind words from the lips of a friend."*

The Persians were also a distinguished people in the early age of the world. Among them a system of religion and philosophy was introduced, differing in many respects, from that of surrounding nations. By some this system is supposed to have been introduced by a philosopher named *Zoroaster*, who is often confounded with the Chaldean of the same name; and by others it is thought, that their religious opinions and observances, having become corrupted, were only revived and restored by him to their original state. The time when this philosopher lived, is uncertain; and while some suppose him to have been the patriarch Abraham, others maintain that he lived and commenced the work of reformation in the reign of Darius Hystaspes, who filled the Persian throne about the year 485 before Christ. Zoroaster is said to have written many works on religion and philosophy; one of which, the *Zend* or *Zendavesta*, is still extant, and explains the order and forms of the rites and ceremonies, and the principles of religion and morality which he taught. His followers regarded this work with the same veneration as Christians do the Bible, looking upon it as an emanation of divine wisdom.

* For further information on the subject of Hindoo literature, the reader is referred to Sir William Jones' Works, Ward's History of Hindoos and the Abbe Dubois' India.

In this book are many laws which appear to have been taken from the laws of Moses, and the account of the creation, as given therein, bears a strong affinity to that of Moses, Zoroaster declaring that the world was created in six periods, making together three hundred and sixty-five days.

Before the time of Zoroaster, there existed in Persia a body of men, known by the name of Magi, who were the priests of the people and the philosophers of the country. The religion which they taught, consisted of the worship of the sun, under the name of *Mithra*, and of *Oromasdes*, the author of all good, and *Arimanius*, the author of all evil; but whether they considered the latter as equal or inferior to Mithra, is uncertain. Zoroaster introduced many alterations into the mode of worship, and into their religious system, and amongst others taught that Mithra was a divinity who acted as a moderator between Oromasdes and Arimanius, and was hence called the Mediator. He believed that these two divinities, or the causes of good and evil, were perpetually at variance, but that, through the intervention of the mediator, the contest would eventually terminate in favor of the good principle. There still exists in Persia, a sect called *Guebres*, or fire worshippers, who still conform to the principles of Zoroaster.*

CHAPTER II.

Literature of the Greeks. Greek Poets: Orpheus, Linus, Musæus. Ancient bards: Homer, Hesiod, Archilochus, Tyrtæus, Alcæus, Sappho. Dramatic poetry: Thespis, Pratinas.

Notwithstanding the laborious researches and investigations of historians and philosophers, darkness and obscurity still rest upon the early history of Greece; and in endeavoring to trace even its outlines, we become bewildered and entangled in the mazes of tradition, or lost in the fabulous and legendary history of the times. Historians, however, are agreed in this,

* Enfield's Hist. of Phil. vol. 1; Cal. Dict. art. Zoroaster.

that the original inhabitants led a savage and wandering life, after the manner of the aboriginal natives of the American continent, and like them, were governed by no regular system of laws, but such only as mutual safety and the peculiar circumstances of the times may have dictated. Instead of commodious dwellings, furnished with the necessary conveniences for domestic comfort, they sheltered themselves in caves or rudely constructed huts; instead of indulging a fastidious appetite in the luxuries of the table, they were content with the precarious support they derived from fishing and hunting. Such was the condition of Greece in its primitive state; yet, did this people, so uncivilized and barbarous in their original manner of living, become the teachers of other nations, in philosophy, poetry, oratory, architecture, sculpture and painting, which rose amongst them to such a state of perfection, that "modern degeneracy," although it has imitated, has not been able, in many essential particulars, to reach them.

In consequence of their communication and intercourse with the nations of the east, particularly with Egypt, where, as we have seen, literature, science and art, had made some progress, the Grecian nations emerged from a state of barbarism, at an earlier period than any other people of Europe. They derived great advantages also, from the Phœnician navigators who visited their islands and coasts in the course of their commercial pursuits, and who, by introducing new wants, gradually introduced new and useful arts, which were cultivated and improved by a people, naturally ingenious, who readily perceived the advantages to be derived from them. That species of knowledge, however, conferred upon them by the Phœnician navigators and adventurers, and which is most intimately connected with the subject of the present volume, is alphabetic writing. *Cadmus*, a Phœnician, who is said to have founded the city of Thebes, in Bœtia, instructed them in the use of the alphabet, (at that time consisting of but sixteen letters,) about 1519 years before Christ, and sixty years after *Cecrops* founded the celebrated city of Athens. The use of letters, notwithstanding their great importance in the preservation of all useful knowledge, did not become general until near four hundred years after; the greater part of the people still continuing to practise picture or hieroglyphic writing.

Before the invention of letters, poetry seems to have been the means by which knowledge of almost every kind was communicated; and in savage and uncultivated nations, minstrels, whose poetical effusions were rude and uncouth in their construction, but energetic and vigorous in their mode of expression, obtained an extraordinary degree of favor and influence. The history of the times, the praises of their God, their religious rites and ceremonies, the peculiar doctrines of their philosophy, and even their laws, were embodied in poetic numbers. They thus expressed their joy for victories obtained over their enemies, celebrated the valiant achievements of their heroes, and poured forth their lamentations over their public and private calamities. This species of composition has prevailed in all nations of which we have any knowledge. The prophets of the Hebrews, "prophesied with psaltery, tabret and harp before them;" and the most ancient specimen of written poetry now extant, is the song of Moses, offered upon the banks of the Red sea, for the deliverance of the Israelites from their Egyptian bondage, which was composed when Greece, afterwards the most polished nation of antiquity, was inhabited by a people not better, or more civilized, than the American savages. Among the Persians, Arabians and other nations of the east, poetry was the earliest form in which their learning was communicated. Tacitus* says, "the Germans abounded with rude strains of verse, the reciters of which, in the language of the country, were called *bards*." Before going to battle they sung the war song, which was a recapitulation of their warlike exploits, and invoked the God of War, as the Scandinavians invoked the name of Odin.

The earliest poets of Greece, of whom we have any information, are *Orpheus*, *Linus* and *Musæus*, who, by many, are supposed to have been contemporaries, but whether they really were so, is very uncertain; they lived at least, in periods not very remote from each other.

Orpheus is supposed to have lived about 1244 years before Christ, and taught in verse the "learned lore" he acquired from the Egyptian philosophers; he also introduced music and poetry into the religious ceremonies of Greece, and thereby increased

* Manners of the Germans, ch. 3.

their solemnity and attractions. *Orpheus* was distinguished not only as a poet and musician, but as a warrior, having been one of that band of adventurers who engaged in the Argonautic expedition, so celebrated in Grecian annals; the true object of which it has puzzled the brain of the antiquary and historian to discover. The departure of this expedition, is thus described by Appolonius Rhodius:

"On their allotted posts now rang'd along,
In seemly order sat the princely throng.
Fast by each chief his glittering armor flames;
The midmost station bold Ancæus claims;
While great Alcides, whose enormous might,
Arm'd with a massy club, provokes the fight,
Now plac'd beside him. In the yielding flood,
The keel, deep sinking, feels the demi god.
Their hawsers now they loose, and on the brine
To Neptune pour the consecrated wine;
While, raising high the Thracian harp, presides
Melodious *Orpheus*, and the movement guides.
On either side the clashing surges broke;
And hoarse remurmur'd to each mighty stroke;
Thick flash'd the brazen arms with streaming light.
While the swift bark pursued her rapid flight;
And ever as the sea-green tide she cleaves,
Forms the long track behind, and whitens all the waves."

A poetical account of this celebrated expedition is still extant, said to have been written by *Orpheus* himself, which is doubted by Aristotle, who even denies the existence of such a person, and attempts to rob him of his honors by attributing the poems known by the name of *Orphic*, to a philosopher named *Cercops*, who does not appear to be otherwise distinguished, than by a place in the works of the Stagyrite. Of the skill of Orpheus in music, many wonderful anecdotes are related. Amongst others, he

"———— as the story goes, could call
Obedient stones to make the Theban wall,
He led them as he pleas'd, the rocks obeyed
And danc'd in order to the tunes he play'd.
Francis' trans. of Hor. Art of Poetry.

Orpheus, it is said, instituted the mysteries of Bacchus, in imitation of the Egyptian mysteries of Isis and Osiris. He is also said to have instituted the Eleusynian mysteries, usually attributed to the goddess Ceres. There are still extant some

fragments of his hymns, which are remarkable as containing the most exalted ideas of the unity of God, and of the attributes of the Deity, without any mixture of the doctrines of polytheism. The following fragment of a hymn, preserved by Suidas, bears so strong a resemblance to the sacred writings, that, if genuine, it is difficult to believe that he had not some knowledge of the Hebrew scriptures. "God is self-existent and every thing exists through him. He is every where, yet no mortal has beheld him. He alone distributes, in his justice, those calamities which afflict mankind. He governs and directs the wind of heaven and controls the lightning. He is seated high in the heavens on a throne of gold, and the earth is his footstool. He stretches his hand to the boundaries of the ocean, and the mountains tremble to their foundations. It is he who created the universe and every thing therein, and who is at once the beginning, the middle and the end." *Orpheus* was a native of Thrace, and having travelled into Egypt, he was initiated into a knowledge of all the sciences taught by the Egyptian philosophers, and on his return from Egypt, and settlement in Greece, he obtained that influence which cultivated minds soon acquire over the rude and uncultivated. This influence, however, was exerted for the purpose of ameliorating the condition of a barbarous race, and introducing among them the arts of peace, which conduce to the comforts and conveniences of life. There are many ancient poems which bear the name of Orpheus, but which are, probably, the productions of other and more recent pens. *Orpheus* was not only admired as a poet, but is also ranked among the ancient philosophers, and taught that God existed from all eternity, and consisted of a compound nature, active and passive—that by the energy of the active principle, he sent forth from himself, all material and spiritual beings, which partake, in different degrees, of the Divine Nature—that all beings, proceeding originally from God, will, after certain purgations, return to him—and that the universe itself will be destroyed by fire, and afterwards renewed.* He is also said by Diodorus Siculus,† to be the first who taught among the Greeks the doctrine of the future punishment of the wicked, and the happiness of the good. We think it extremely doubtful, whether any

* Enfield's Hist. of Philos. vol. 1, p. 126.
† Lib. 1, 96.

such doctrine was ever taught by Orpheus, who, we have already seen, received his knowledge from the Egyptians, to whose priests the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, was never revealed. This doctrine was not even made known to Moses, but was reserved to be brought to light by the son of God himself.

Linus was a native of Thebes in Bœtia, and was also ranked among philosophers, as almost every man was in those early times, who had more than an ordinary share of information, and who was careful to wrap in mystery, his peculiar doctrines and opinions. Of his poetry or his system of philosophy, little can be said either by way of praise or censure, as all the information we possess, with regard to either, is contained in the writings of others, consisting of a few fragments only. He is thought by some to have been the first inventor of rhyme, and to have preceded Orpheus. Virgil in his sixth eclogue places him near the muses on Parnassus.

Tum canet errantem Permessi ad flumina Gallum
Aonias in montes ut dixerit una sororum;
Utque viro Phoebi chorus assurrexerit omnis;
Ut Linus hæc illi divino carmine pastor,
Floribus atque apio crines ornatus amaro
Dixerit: Hos tibi dant calamos, en accipe, Musæ,
Ascræo quos anti seni: quibus ille solebat
Cantando rigidas deducere montibus ornos.
His tibi Grynæi nemoris dictatur origo;
Ne quis sit lucus, quo se plus jactet Apollo.

Ecl. VI. 65.

He taught which Muse did by Apollo's will
Guide wandering Gallus to the Aonian hill;
(Which place the gods for solemn meetings chose)
With deep respect the learned senate rose,
And *Linus* thus, (deputed by the rest)
The hero's welcome and their thanks express'd;
This harp of old to Hesiod did belong,
To this, the muses' gift, join thy harmonious song;
Charm'd by these strings, trees starting from the ground,
Have follow'd with delight the powerful sound,
Thus consecrated, thy Grynean grove
Shall have no equal in Apollo's love.

Earl of Roscommon.

Musæus is said to have been the disciple of *Orpheus*, and to have presided over the Eleusynian mysteries long celebrated at Athens with solemn rites—by sacrifices, prayers and ablutions. Of

his poetry but a few fragments remain. That he held a high rank as a poet in the time of Virgil is evident from the manner in which he is noticed in the sixth book of the Æneid.

> Quos circumfusos sic est affata Sybylla
> Musæum ante omnes; medium nam plurima turba
> Hunc habet, atque humeris extantem suspicit altis.
>
> Leb. VI. 666.

> To these the Sybil thus her speech address'd;
> And first to him, surrounded by the rest,
> Towering his height and ample was his breast;
> Say, happy souls, divine Musæus say.
>
> *Dryden.*

The doctrines of philosophy or religion held by Musæus were nearly the same as those of his master Orpheus. He died at Phalerœ, and the Athenians honored his memory by erecting a public monument.*

The poetry of these ancient poets was chiefly composed for, and recited in the services of religion, and they were regarded by the rude and superstitious multitude, not only as men of superior minds, but as, in some degree, partaking of divinity. *Musæus*, in addition to his merits as a poet and philosopher, was acquainted with so much of the healing art, as to enable him to administer with success in some complaints, and he is said to have composed a poem on the cure of diseases.

To the poets above mentioned succeeded the *Bards* who attended the Grecian chieftains in their hostile expeditions. They were the *Improvisatori* of Greece, and recited at the public games, and in the halls of their chiefs, the "passing tidings of the times," accompanied by the music of the lyre or the harp.

> Then would they sing achievements high,
> And circumstance of chivalry,
> Till the wrapt traveller would stay
> Forgetful of the closing day.
>
> *Scott.*

These bards travelled over Greece, protected from insult and injury, by their sacred characters, and were every where treated with respect and veneration, as favored and inspired by the gods. They were intimately acquainted with the history of the age in

*The works of Orpheus, Linus and Musæus which remain, have been collected and published in a volume entitled "*Poetæ Minores Græci.*"

which they lived, and were rich in legendary lore, and the tales of other times. From them *Homer* collected the materials for his immortal poems, the Illiad and Odyssey, and from them he acquired that knowledge of the domestic manners of the Greeks and Trojans, during the heroic ages, with which he has relieved the details of blood and carnage.

No poet of ancient or modern times has acquired the celebrity of *Homer*, nor is there one of whose life less is known. He is supposed to have lived about 900 years before the birth of Christ, and about 300 years after the siege of Troy. Since his reputation has been established, and fame has crowned him the "Prince of Poets," many cities have disputed the honor of having given him birth; and the emperor *Adrian*, in order to remove all doubts upon the subject, consulted the oracle, who answered that he was born in the island of *Ithaca*. Notwithstanding the response of the oracle, the learned are still divided upon this question, which it is of little importance to settle; nor is it material to his fame to know, whether he was born blind, or became so in his old age, or whether he was blind at all. It is sufficient for us that we possess his works, not only in the original, but in the inimitable translation of Pope—works, which disinterested and impartial criticism has placed among the most splendid literary monuments ever erected by human genius. *Homer* has been the subject of much learned criticism, among both ancient and modern writers. Whilst *Horace* assigns him an elevated rank as a moral teacher, even above some of the most celebrated philosophers, Pythagoras, a distinguished philosopher, whose doctrines and opinions were derived from Egypt, condemned him to Tartarus, for imparting false notions of the deity, and even the more gentle Plato would not give him a place in his ideal republic. *Quintillian*, the famous rhetorician of Rome, whose judgment in ancient literature is much esteemed, speaking of Homer, says, "Him no one ever excelled in sublimity on great topics, in propriety on small ones; but whether diffused or compressed, gay or grave; whether for his abundance or his brevity, he is equally to be admired, nor is he supereminent for his poetical talents alone, but for his oratorical also." *Aristophanes*, whose peculiar genius led rather to ridicule than commendation, either overcome by a sense of justice, or awed by the

superior genius of Homer, thus speaks of him in his comedy of the "Frogs;"

"———————— Homer, bard divine!
Gods, to what height he soars, whilst he arrays
The warrior bright in arms, directs the fight
And with heroic virtue fires the soul."

Previously, and subsequently also, to the time of Homer, a class of poets distinguished by the name of *Rhapsodists*, wandered from city to city, from place to place, and recited verses, either of their own composition, or the composition of others, at the public festivals. These recitations were much encouraged, as they were intended to disseminate among the listening crowd, maxims of wisdom and virtue; they were thus productive of beneficial effects upon the hearts and minds of men, and were not only countenanced but encouraged, by the great Spartan and Athenian lawgivers, Lycurgus and Solon. Homer, like the Rhapsodists, led a wandering life, and recited his poems at the public games of Greece. To these Rhapsodists is posterity, in a great degree, indebted for the preservation of the Homeric poems; they recited them at the public festivals, one reciting a certain portion, and another taking up the subject where the first left off. Lycurgus is supposed to have been the first who collected and arranged in suitable order, the fragments of the Illiad and Odyssey. About three hundred and seven years after, Pisistratus, who loved learning, and was enraptured with the sublime poetry of Homer, caused them to be again arranged and corrected; in this work Solon is said to have been engaged. The first edition of Homer after the invention of the art of printing, appeared at Florence, A. D. 1488.

Amongst modern writers, who aspire to the rank of critics, the Illiad and Odyssey are standing subjects of notice—the standards by which to estimate every other claim to poetical distinction, and whatever diversity of opinion may prevail upon minor points, all agree in awarding him the first rank, and hailing him as the "Father of Poetry."

"By Homer taught, the modern poet sings,
In epic strains of heroes, wars and kings."

In a work like this, it is not to be expected that we should enter into an elaborate exposition of the beauty and sublimity

of language which distinguish this great poet, and his peculiar claims to the distinction he has acquired; a few remarks will be sufficient to indicate the opinion we have ourselves adopted. To estimate his claims we need not go back to the period in which he lived, and compare his style of poetic composition with the then rude state of society. His genius would irradiate any country, however advanced in refinement, and however exalted in intellectual improvement. Virgil, Dante, Tasso, Shakspeare, Milton and Byron, have respectively thrown a brilliant light over the ages in which they lived, and have gained a never-dying reputation, and a never-fading crown, more splendid than that which adorns the victor's brow, yet they have not surpassed him in the various requisites of a poet, notwithstanding all the advantages of education and of refined and polished society. *Homer* was nature's poet, endowed with a mind capable of grasping every subject he examined, and a bold and fertile imagination, which he exercised in describing scenes and events in the most glowing and animated style; his language, like that of Shakspeare, is suited to his subjects no less accurately than the actions and sentiments of his heroes are to their characters. Hence it is, that we enter into all the feelings of the different actors, in the interesting scenes he paints so vividly, and the actions he describes, and feel ourselves irresistibly moved to lament the unhappy fall of the ill-starred house of Priam.

The place that contains the ashes of Homer, is equally uncertain with that which gave him birth. Altars and temples were, however, erected in honor of him in various cities, and divine honors were paid him. Among the most distinguished monuments to his memory was a temple erected by Ptolomy Philopater, in which a statute was placed, surrounded by the representation of the seven cities that contended for the honor of his birth.

The period in which *Hesiod* flourished is uncertain; the most generally received opinion, however, is that of Herodotus, namely, that he was contemporary with Homer. Of his poems two only have reached us entire; one entitled the "Works and Days," the other the "Theogony, or the birth of the Gods," together with a fragment of the "Shield of Hercules." The poem entitled "Works and Days" is divided into three parts, mythological, moral and didactic. In the first he relates to the fable of Pando-

ra, and gives a description of the several ages of the world, which he divides into five, namely, the age of gold, the age of silver, the age of brass, the age of demigods and heroes, which we call the heroic age, and the age of iron. The second part contains many moral reflections addressed to his brother Perseus, with whom he had had a dispute about the paternal inheritance; the third part appears to be principally intended for husbandmen, being a kind of treatise on agriculture, containing many useful precepts and instructions, suited to the then state of agriculture, intermixed with moral reflections arising from the contemplation of the works of nature.*

"———————— Hesiod gave
The useful lesson how to till the earth,
And marked the seasons, when to sow the grain
And when to reap ————————"

From this work *Virgil* is supposed to have received the first idea of the *Georgics*. In his "Theogony" he treats of the genealogy of the gods, and the creation of the world, and advances opinions which modern philosophers, in the present advanced state of science, would consider absurd and ridiculous. He believed that "first of all existed Chaos; next in order the broad-bosomed Earth, and then appeared Love, the most beautiful of immortals. From Chaos sprung Erebus and dusky Night, and from Night and Erebus sprung Ether and smiling Day. But first the Earth produced the starry Heavens, commensurate with itself, and the barren sea; then combined with heaven she bore the tremendous Titans. Then were born to heaven and earth, thunder, lightning and the flaming bolt, besides eruption, hurricane and earthquake." However absurd this theory may appear, it is at least as rational and plausible as the theories of many modern philosophers, particularly as that of *De Maillet*, who was of opinion that man began his career as a *fish*, or that of *Kepler*, who considered the earth to be possessed of living faculties and a circulating vital fluid; that all the particles of it are alive and possess instinct and volition; that the organs through which the large animal breathes are the mountains, and that mineral veins are abcesses, and metals the product of rottenness and disease. The fame of Hesiod among

*Cours de Litterature par La Harpe, tome 1, p. 195.

his countrymen was not founded solely upon his claims to the character of a philosopher; his poetical talents, which were held in high estimation, conferred upon him greater distinction. His poetry, if it does not possess the energy and sublimity of Homer, is pronounced by competent judges to be remarkable for ease and elegance of diction. He is said to have divided the public applause with Homer, and even to have borne off the prize of poetry in a contest at the funeral obsequies of Amphidamas. This story is denied by *La Harpe*, who, being extremely jealous of the reputation of Homer, attributes its invention to his enemies, who were envious of his fame.*

During the period which intervened from the age of Homer and Hesiod, to that of *Thespis*, when dramatic poetry was introduced, poetical compositions were almost exclusively confined to the ode, or lyric poetry, so called from its being intended to be sung, accompanied by the music of the lyre. "In the ode," observes Dr. Blair, "poetry retains its first and most ancient form; that form under which the original bards poured forth their enthusiastic strains, praised their gods and their heroes, and celebrated their victories." The most celebrated poets of the abovementioned period, are *Archilocus*, *Tyrtæus*, *Alcæus* and *Sappho*.

Archilochus was a poet of Paros, who flourished about 716 years before the Christian era. He wrote many elegies, odes, satires and epigrams, and was the inventor of that species of verse called *Iambic*. He is mentioned by Herodotus† as having written some Iambic verses on the murder of Candaules, king of Lydia, who had imprudently exposed his wife to the view of Gyges, one of his ministers. Although his poetical compositions are said to have been of so licentious a character, as to cause his banishment from Lacedemon, yet they are pronounced by *Quintillian* to have been remarkable for their ingenuity, their elegance of style, and energy of language. He wrote so severe a satire on *Lycambus*, who refused him his daughter in marriage, that the unhappy man hung himself in despair. This circumstance is mentioned by *Horace*, in his epistle to Mæcenas, in the first book.

——— Parios ego primus iambos
Ostendi Latio; numeros animosque secutus
Archilochi, non res, et agentia verba Lycambeu.

* Cours de Litterature, tome 1, p. 195. † Clio. ch. 12.

Ac me ne foliis ideo brevioribus ornes
Quod timui mutare modos et carminis artem;
Temperat *Archilochi* musam pede mascula Sappho
Temperat Alceæus.———" *Lib.* 1, *Ep.* 19.

To keen Iambics I first tun'd my lyre,
And warm'd with great Archilochus' fire,
His rapid numbers chose, but shunn'd with care
That style which drove *Lycambus* to despair;
I fear'd to change the structure of his line,
And shall a short-lived wreath be therefore mine?
Sappho, whose verse with manly spirit glows
And great Alcæus his iambics chose. *Francis.*

Horace again speaks of him in his "Art of Poetry:"

Archilochum proprio rabies armavit iambo:
Hunc socci cepere pedem grandesque cothurni,
Alternis aptum sermonibus, et populaus,
Vicentem strepitus, et natum rebus agendis.
De Art. Poet. 79.

Archilochus, with fierce resentment warm'd,
Was with his own severe iambics arm'd,
Whose rapid numbers suited to the stage,
In comic humor, or in tragic rage,
With sweet variety were found to please,
And taught the dialogue to flow with ease;
Their numerous cadence was for action fit,
And form'd to quell the clamors of the pit.
Francis.

Tyrtæus was a poet of Attica, and flourished about 680 years before Christ, of whose compositions nothing remain but the fragments of a few elegies. The most remarkable circumstance in the life of this poet, is, his appointment of general in the Lacedemonian army. In the second Messenian war, the Lacedemonians being hard pressed by the Messenians under their heroic commander *Aristomines*, consulted the oracle, who directed them to apply to the Athenians for a general. They did so, and the Athenians sent them the poet *Tyrtæus*, who had borne arms, it is true, but had never attained any distinction as a soldier, nor commanded as a general—he was sent more in derision, than with any expectation that he would retrieve the fallen fortunes of Sparta. He repaired, however, to the Spartan camp, where he found the troops dispirited by repeated defeats and disasters, and ready to fly before the victorious *Aristomines*. *Tyrtæus* possessed neither skill nor experience as a commander, but he

"———— by the muse inspir'd,
To deeds of arms the martial spirit fired."

and so raised the drooping spirits, and roused the dormant courage of the Spartans, that they defeated the Messenians, and recovered their wonted energies. Such was the power of poetry and music, and such the influence of the sacred character of the bard. *Tyrtæus* was afterwards made a citizen of Lacedemon, and treated with great consideration and attention.

Alcæus was a lyric poet of Mitylene, in the island of Lesbos, and lived about 600 years before Christ. Of all his works, but a few fragments remain. *Quintillian*, on whose judgment we have already had occasion to rely, praises him for the boldness of his satire, and the moral tendency of some of his writings, but acknowledges that he is sometimes too licentious—a fault which seems to attach to almost all the ancient poets, and from which even the polished and courtly *Horace*, who lived in a more refined age, was not exempt. He was contemporary with *Sappho*, and one of her ardent admirers.

"Alcæus strung his sounding lyre,
And smote it with a hand of fire;
To Sappho, fairest of the fair,
Chaunting the loud and lofty air."

She, however, continued insensible, and rejected his address. *Alcæus*, although celebrated as a poet, was not, like some of his brother bards, distinguished as a warrior; he is said to have fled from the field of battle, leaving his armor, which his enemies afterwards hung up in the temple of Minerva, as a monument of his disgrace.

Sappho was born in the island of Lesbos, and was not only celebrated for her beauty and her poetical talents, but for an amorous and voluptuous disposition, which is clearly shown in the following fragment of a poem she addressed to her mother, who had probably endeavored to restrain her prevailing inclinations:

"———— Cease, dear mother, cease to chide,
I can no more the golden shuttle guide,
While Venus thus through every glowing vein,
Asserts the charming youth's resistless reign.

She composed nine books of odes and lyric verses, besides epigrams and elegies, which were extant in the time of Horace, who takes frequent occasion to speak of the poetess, who was called, on account of the splendor of her poetical genius, the tenth muse; thus in the 13th ode of the second book:

Quam pœne furvæ regna Prosepinæ,
Et judicantem vidimus Æacum,
Sedesque discretas piorum, et
Æoliis fidibus querentem
Sappho puellis de popularibus.

Lib. 2, *Car.* 13.

How near was I those dreary plains
Where Pluto's auburn consort reigns,
Where awful sits the judge of Hell,
Where pious spirits blissful dwell,
Where *Sappho*, in melodious strains
Of cruel calumny complains. *Francis.*

"Among the multitude of poets of antiquity," says Addison, "there is none whose fragments are so beautiful as those of Sappho. One may see, by what is left of them, that she followed nature in all her thoughts, without descending to those little points, conceits and turns of wit, with which many of our modern lyrics are so miserably infected. Her soul seems to have been made up of love and poetry. She felt the passion in all its warmth, and described it in all its symptoms." Of the numerous works of Sappho, two only remain, which are universally considered as the most beautiful specimens of ancient lyric poetry, that has survived the ravages of time, and which are sufficient to confirm the character antiquity has given her, of possessing a sublimity of genius which has been seldom equalled. We will here present the fragments alluded to, in the beautiful version of Ambrose Phillips. The first is part of an ode preserved by Longinus, the celebrated critic:

Blest as the immortal gods is he
The youth who fondly sits by thee,
And hears and sees thee all the while
Softly speak and sweetly smile.

'Twas this deprived my soul of rest,
And rais'd such tumults in my breast;
For while I gaz'd, in transport tost,
My breath was gone, my voice was lost:

My bosom glow'd; the subtle flame
Ran quick through all my vital frame;
O'er my dim eyes a darkness hung;
My ears with hollow murmurs rung,

In dewy damps my limbs were chill'd;
My blood with gentle horrors thrill'd;

My feeble pulse forgot to play;
I fainted, sunk and died away.

The following "Ode to Venus," has also been preserved, and is a brilliant example of lyric poetry:

O Venus, beauty of the skies,
To whom a thousand temples rise,
Gaily false in gentle smiles,
Full of love-perplexing wiles;
O goddess, from my heart remove
The wasting cares and pains of love.

If ever thou hast kindly heard
A song in soft distress preferr'd,
Propitious to my tuneful vow,
Oh, gentle goddess! hear me now.
Descend, thou bright, immortal guest,
In all thy radiant charms confess'd
Thou once did leave almighty Jove,
And all the golden roofs above:
The car thy wanton sparrows drew,
Hovering in air they lightly flew;
As to my bower they wing'd their way,
I saw their quivering pinions play.

The birds dismiss'd (while you remain,)
Bore back their empty car again:
Then with looks divinely mild,
In every heavenly feature smil'd,
And ask'd what new complaints I made,
And why I call'd you to my aid.

What phrenzy in my bosom rag'd,
And by what care to be assuag'd?
What gentle youth I would allure,
Whom in my artful toils secure?
Who does thy tender heart subdue,
Tell me, my Sappho, tell me who?

Though now he shuns thy longing arms,
He soon shall court thy slighted charms;
Thou now thy offerings he despise,
He soon to thee shall sacrifice;
Though now he freeze, he soon shall burn,
And be thy victim in his turn.

Celestial visitant, once more
Thy needful presence I implore!
In pity come, and ease my grief,
Bring my distemper'd soul relief,
Favor thy suppliant's hidden fires,
And give me all my heart desires.

Sappho fell violently in love with a youth named Phaon, who did not return her love; in a fit of desperation she threw herself into the sea, from the promontory of Luecate in Acarnania, and perished.

Lyric poetry being susceptible of different ornaments, and adapted to a variety of subjects, from "grave to gay," and admitting also the boldest and most excursive flights of imagination, long continued a favorite species of poetic composition. Accompanied with the music of the lyre, it elevated the soul to heavenly contemplations, brightened the brow upon which "pale melancholy" sat, or stilled the turbulent passions which too often mar the pleasures of social intercourse, and destroy domestic happiness. Lyric poetry, which had been cultivated with so much care by the Lesbian poetess, and attained so high a character, did not degenerate at her death. The seed having been sown in a generous and prolific soil, and carefully nourished, produced poets of almost every grade of excellence. Some were distinguished for a vehemence and energy of language and boldness of style, which commanded attention, and others for a peculiar grace and elegance of manner and sweetness of expression, which interested the heart and subdued the feelings; of the one the "deep mouthed Pindar" is a striking example, of the other the plaintive Simonides. Before, however, we speak of them, let us advert to a new species of poetry, different in its objects and character, from that which had before been cultivated, and which, in its progress from rudeness to refinement, produced sensible effects upon the manners and habits, not only of the people of Greece, but in later times, upon the manners of other nations of Europe—we mean *dramatic poetry*. The moral or immoral tendency of the drama, its beneficial or hurtful effects upon society, we leave to others to examine, as it does not fall within our plan. We mean only to speak of the drama and dramatic poetry, as constituting an important link in the chain of literary history we are attempting to review.

In the early ages of Greece, before the refinements of society had produced a change in the public taste, tragedy, or the drama, (then synonomous terms,) was rude and imperfect, being nothing more than a song or hymn, called the "Song of the Goat," which was chanted by a chorus of singers, at the conclusion of the vintage, in honor of the god Bacchus. These hymns were

sometimes sung by the whole company, and sometimes by separate bands, answering each other alternately, and bore but a faint resemblance to the drama in its present state. About 550 years before Christ, *Thespis* appeared, who effected an important change, by the introduction of an additional actor, who threw some variety into the entertainment, and relieved the singers by the recitation of some sad or merry tale, as the temper of the moment dictated, which was unconnected, however, with the main piece. The stage upon which Thespis and his "vagrant players" exhibited their dramatic pieces, was nothing more than a cart, in which they travelled from town to town, from village to village, as do our modern mountebanks.

> Ignotum tragicæ genus invenisse camœnæ
> Dicitur, et plaustris vexisse poemata Thespis
> Quæ canerent agerentque peruncti fæcibus ora.
>
> *Hor. De Art. Poet.* 275.

> Thespis, inventor of the tragic art,
> Carried his vagrant players in a cart;
> High o'er the crowd the mimic tribe appear'd
> And play'd and sung, with lees of wine besmear'd.
>
> *Francis.*

From this rude and imperfect state, in the short space of seventy years, by the efforts of succeeding dramatic writers, and particularly of *Æschylus*, *Euripides* and *Sophocles*, it arrived at its more perfect form; that form which, in a great measure, it still retains, and may still be distinguished, even under the garb of modern improvement. Among modern critics, it has been a subject of controversy, whether tragedy was invented by *Thespis*, or whether he is only entitled to the honor of having changed the "Song of the Goat" into something like a regular drama. The controversy can only be considered important in a literary point of view, as tending to establish the time when, and by whom, *dramatic* poetry was first cultivated. Plutarch, in his life of Solon, says, "Thespis gave rise and beginning to the very rudiments of tragedy;" in the passage above quoted, Horace calls him the "inventor of the tragic art," and from the Arundelian marbles, or Parian chronicle, which contain a chronological account of the remarkable events in the history of Greece, from the time of Cecrops to the year 354 before Christ, we learn, that "Thespis was the first who gave being to tragedy."

Of the dramatic productions of Thespis, none are now extant, if indeed, any were ever committed to writing. It would be interesting to compare the rude dramas of Thespis, with the more refined productions of his illustrious successors.

Thespis was succeeded in dramatic poetry by *Patrinas*, a Peloponessian. He wrote many dramatic pieces, most of which were of a satirical character, and were performed as farces. Actuated by a spirit of improvement, he effected a change in the mode of representation. He procured the erection of a theatre for dramatic exhibitions, plays still continuing to be exhibited on scaffolds, or in booths. He also attempted to make some alteration in the musical part of the entertainment, by which the confusion of voices would be avoided, and the recitative more distinctly heard by the audience; the people, however, were too strongly attached to the ancient mode to which they were accustomed, to submit to the alteration. They opposed it with so much violence, the *Patrinas*, to appease the tumult, came forward, and accompanied with music and dancing, recited the following, one of the few productions of his muse which has been preserved:

What means this tumult? why this rage?
What thunder shakes the Athenian stage?
'T is frantic Bromius bids me sing,
He tunes the pipe, he smites the string;
The Dryads with their chief accord,
Submit and hail the drama's lord.
Be still and let distraction cease
Nor thus profane the muse's peace;
By sacred fiat I preside
The minstrel's master and his guide;
He while the chorus strains proceed,
Shall follow with responsive reed;
To measur'd notes whilst they advance
He in wild maze shall lead the dance.
So generals in the front appear
Whilst music echoes from the rear;
Nor silence each discordant sound,
For see, with ivy chaplet crown'd,
Bacchus appears! he speaks in me,
Hear and obey the god's decree. *Cumberland.*

The effect of this address was such as might have been expected; the people were appeased, and Patrinas was permitted to carry into effect the improvements he had introduced. He

is said to have been the author of fifty dramatic pieces. Another dramatic poet of this period was *Phrynicus;* he was the first who introduced the female mask upon the stage. His most celebrated production was the tragedy of the "Siege of Miletus," founded upon the sacking of that city by the Persian troops. The representation of this tragedy had such an effect upon the Athenian audience, that the magistrates prohibited its future representation, and condemned the author to a fine of a thousand drachmas.

CHAPTER III.

Literature of the Greeks. Stesichorus. Anacreon. Simonides. Pindar. Æschylus. Sophocles. Euripides.

Stesichorus, *Anacreon* and *Simonides*, flourished about the same time, that is about 520 years before Christ. *Tesias*, or *Stesichorus*, was a native of Himera, in Sicily, and although he was not a native of Greece, and did not even visit that country until late in life, we have chosen to introduce him in this place, among Greek poets, because of the fame he acquired, and because his poems were written in the Doric, one of the dialects into which the language of Greece was divided. He composed twenty-six books of odes, epigrams and other poems, all of which are lost, except a few fragments scattered through the works of later writers. As a lyric poet he is said to have been unequalled except by Pindar, and he is even said to have equalled Homer in sublimity and grandeur of conception, and energy and eloquence of language. He held a distinguished place in the affections of his countrymen, and when he died in the city of Catana, in the island of Sicily, he was buried at the public expense; a tomb was erected to his memory, near one of the city gates, which was afterwards called by his name, and divine honors were decreed him.

Anacreon, whose fame is familiar to all lovers of wine and mirth, and who is well known in modern times and to English readers, by means of the elegant translation of his odes by *Moore*,

was born at Teos, a city of Ionia. He was early distinguished for his poetical abilities; his lively character and social disposition strongly recommended him to those of similar character, to whom the fascinations of the sparkling bowl presented irresistible allurements. He enjoyed the friendship of Polycrates, tyrant of Samos, and of Hipparchus, son of Pisistratus, both liberal patrons of learning and learned men, the latter of whom sent a fifty-oared galley to bring him from Teos to Athens. Of the poetry of Anacreon it may with justice be said, that "the principal characteristic beauties consist of a singular simplicity of diction, a careless felicity and uncommon delicacy of expression, and although almost exclusively devoted to amatory and bachanalian subjects, they exhibit a wonderful fertility of invention and variety of illustration." The moral character of Anacreon has been variously represented, as it has been the subject of investigation by his friends, or his enemies, both of whom have, no doubt, suffered their partialities and prejudices to carry them too far, to enable them to form a correct estimate. On the one hand he has been represented as a drunkard—as

"———————— old Anacreon wet with wine,
And crown'd with wreathes of Lesbian vine."

On the other he is described as worthy of imitation in private and domestic life—as a model of moral purity. If the sentiments of an author, as contained in his works, are to be considered as evidences of his real character and opinions, and if the celebration of love and wine in poetic numbers, involve immorality, then the character of Anacreon cannot escape the censure of the rigidly moral. Although he may not have been an habitual drunkard, we think his devotion to the "jolly god," and his fondness for wine, are manifest in almost every line of his works.

"Mix me, child, a cup divine,
Crystal water, ruby wine;
Weave the frontlet richly flushing,
O'er my wintry temples blushing.
Mix the brimmer; Love and I
Shall no more the gauntlet try,
Here—upon this holy bowl
I surrender all my soul.
* * * * * * * * * *
To-day I'll haste to quaff my wine
As if to-morrow ne'er should shine

But if to-morrow comes, when then—
I'll haste to quaff my wine again.
And thus while all our days are bright,
Nor time has dimm'd their blooming light,
Let us the festal hours beguile
With mantling cup and cordial smile,
And shed from every bowl of wine,
The richest drop on Bacchus' shrine!"

Besides odes and epigrams, Anacreon is said to have written elegies and hymns, nearly all of which have perished in the general wreck of ancient learning. The following beautiful "Reflections at sea, on a moonlight evening," show that although the praises of wine principally occupied the muse of Anacreon, yet she sometimes tuned her lyre to other strains.

"'T is sweet, upon the vessel's side
To stand, and view the passing tide,
Sadly to mark the silent scene
In summer evening's close serene;
To muse on one, who far away,
Perhaps beholds his setting ray;
And at the sight may think, the while,
What welcome words, what cheerful smile,
Shall greet the youth whose love taught toil
Has driven her from his native soil.

Such thoughts can sweetly soothe the soul
That bends, a slave, to Love's control!
Heedless he hears old ocean roar,
And waste his fury on the shore;
Tranquil and calm, he boldly braves
The howling hurricane and dashing waves.

Gay Hope then yields with brightest rays
The prospect of his future days.
Around his couch she darts her beams
And bathes in bliss his shadowy dreams.
In gloomy hours a silent tear
May mark the steps of life's career:
To distant climes when forc'd away
He sadly chides the lingering day:
Yet Hope is kindly hovering nigh,
His soul to sooth, his tear to dry.
Soft she whispers future pleasures
Tasting Cupid's richest treasures."*

Simonides was not only celebrated as a poet, but from the moral tendency and philosophical character of his writings, was

* For the above translations of Anacreon, I am indebted to the interesting "Memoirs of Anacreon," by John E. Hall, Esq. published in the "Port Folio."

ranked among the philosophers of the age. He stood high in the estimation of his countrymen, and enjoyed the particular friendship of the most distinguished men of his time, among whom were Hipparchus of Athens, and Pausamas, king of Lacedemon. His poetical compositions consisted of odes, elegies, epigrams and dramatic pieces, but he was more distinguished as an elegiac than a lyric poet. His elegies particularly were remarkable for their elegance of language, and the plaintive and pathetic strain in which they were composed, which moved and interested the feelings. "No person was ever better acquainted with the sublime and delightful art of interesting and moving the passions; nor did any one paint with greater exactness those situations and misfortunes which excite pity. It is not the poet to whom we are attentive; we hear the cries and groans of a distracted family, which weeps the death of a father or a son; we see an affectionate mother struggling with her son against the fury of the waves, while a thousand gulfs yawn on all sides, and menace her with a thousand deaths; the shade of Achilles rises from the bottom of the tomb, and announces to the Greeks, about to quit the shores of Illium, the innumerable calamities which await them by sea and land."* *Simonides* is reproached with ingratitude, and with being the first who prayed for hire. He died at about ninety years of age. A few fragments only remain of the numerous pieces of which he was the author.

Pindar was born at Thebes in Bœotia, about 521 years before Christ, and is distinguished at the "great father of lyric poetry." He was early trained to music and poetry under *Myrtis*, a woman distinguished for her talents, and soon acquired a considerable reputation. Although five times vanquished in poetic contests with *Corinna*, a poetess of Tanagra, near Thebes, and who was also a pupil of Myrtis, he gained the prize at the olympic games, and was crowned in the presence of assembled Greece. His odes, which are all that remain of his writings, are much admired for "sublimity of sentiment, grandeur of expression, energy and magnificence of style, boldness of metaphor, harmony of numbers, and elegance of diction." Horace compares him to a river swollen by sudden rains overflowing its banks.

* Travels of Anach. vol. VI. 153, Lon. ed.

Monte decurrens velut amnis, imbres
Quem super notas aluere ripas,
Fervet, immensusque ruit profundo
Pindarus ore.

Lib. 4. Car. 2.

As when a river, swollen by sudden showers,
O'er it known banks, from some steep mountain pours,
So in profound, immeasurable song,
The deep mouth'd Pindar, foaming, pours along.

Francis.

Pindar owed his fame principally to the hymns he composed in honor of the gods, or to celebrate the triumph of the victors in the public games. They were repeated before the most crowded assemblies in the temples of Greece, and always received with enthusiasm. After the death of Pindar, a statue was erected to him in the most public place of Thebes, and at the celebration of one of the Grecian festivals, a portion of the victim which had been offered in sacrifice, was reserved for his descendants. Alexander the great, out of respect to the poet, preserved the house which he had inhabited, and reduced the rest of the city of Thebes to ashes. Thus did the pride of victory render homage to the superiority of genius.

Pindar enjoyed the friendship of, and was patronised by, Theron of Agrigentum, and Hiero of Syracuse. They were two of the most celebrated and munificent princes of the age, and were distinguished for their liberality towards learned men. Pindar took frequent occasion to celebrate their praises in lofty strains. Of Theron he speaks as follows:

Ye choral hymns, harmonious lays,
Sweet rulers of the Lyric string!
What god, what hero's godlike praise,
What mortal shall we sing?
With Jove, with Pisa's guardian god
Begin, O muse, the Olympic ode.
Alcides, Jove's heroic son,
The second honor claims;
Who offering up the spoils from Augeas won,
Establish'd to his sire the Olympic games;
When, bright in wreaths of conquest, Theron shone.
Then of victorious Theron sing,
Of Theron, hospitable, just and great!
Fam'd Agrigentum's honor'd king,
The prop and bulwark of the state;
A righteous prince! whose flowering virtues grace,
The venerable stem of his illustrious race.

Hiero having gained the crown in the Olympic games, Pindar alludes to that event in one of his odes, and thus takes occasion to speak of his friend and patron:

Happy he, whose glorious brow
Pisa's honor'd chaplets crown;
Calm his stream of life shall flow,
Shelter'd by his high renown.
That alone is bliss supreme;
Which unknowing to decay,
Still with ever shining beam
Gladdens each succeeding day.
Then for happy Hiero weave
Garlands of Æolian strains;
Him those honors to receive
The Olympic law ordains.
Nor more worthy of her lay
Can the muse a mortal find;
Greater in imperial sway,
Richer in a virtuous mind.

Contemporary with Pindar flourished the great tragic poet Æschylus. He was an Athenian by birth, and was early distinguished among his countrymen for poetic genius. Previously to his time, tragedy was in a rude and imperfect state, notwithstanding the talents of Thespis, Pratinas and others, had been exerted for its advancement. Being endowed by nature with a superior genius, and a mind far above the ordinary stamp, and conscious of the imperfections of the drama, he determined upon endeavoring to reform it, which he soon accomplished by introducing radical and important alterations, not only in the structure and arrangement of tragedies, but in the manner of representation. Before he was twenty-five years of age, several of his tragedies were represented, and received with great applause by an Athenian audience. Melpomene appeared with a grace, spirit and dignity unknown before, and assumed a more elevated rank among her sister muses. The improvements he effected in the manner of representation, were the introduction of several actors clothed in flowing robes, the use of masks by the performers, expressive of the characters they represented, and the decoration of the stage with appropriate scenery.

Æschylus was distinguished for his valor and conduct in the celebrated battles of Marathon and Platea, and the sea fight of Salamis. The scenes then represented before him, made so deep an impression upon his mind, that he afterwards skilfully adapted

them to scenic representation. He was the author of ninety tragedies, forty of which were rewarded with public prizes. Of all his dramatic productions, seven only have reached us, which have been translated in an elegant and spirited manner by Potter.

The tragedies of Æschylus have all the marks of a bold, original and inventive genius, relying solely upon its own powers and energies—his imagination was bold and comprehensive, seizing upon every circumstance fitted to produce dramatic effect, and attract the attention of the audience. In the language of *Cumberland*, "his pen, like his sword, is a weapon of terror; the spectacle which his drama exhibits, is a sublime scene of awful magnificence, and his sentiment and style are in unison with his subject." In no one of his tragedies which have survived the ravages of time, are the various qualities that constitute the sublime of dramatic poetry, more conspicuously displayed, than in that of *Agamemnon*, written when he was upwards of sixty years of age—a time of life when the mental powers of most men are on the decline. In the composition of this tragedy, and particularly in portraying the characters of Agamemnon, Clytemnestra and Cassandra, all the faculties of his powerful mind appear to have been called into action, and exerted with striking, if not tremendous, effect. In the Agamemnon of Æschylus, there is none of that fierceness of character, impetuosity of temper, and haughtiness of demeanor, which characterise the Agamemnon of Homer, and which most persons would look for in the proud leader of the Grecian armies; on the contrary, the author has invested him with a certain mildness of disposition, and openness of character, which are admirably contrasted with the duplicity of Clytemnestra and her bold and fearless spirit. Her duplicity is strongly marked in her reception of Agamemnon, after an absence of ten years. She receives him with every mark of joy and affection, and after pouring forth her complaints for his long absence, she thus addresses him:

> ——————at thy return
> The gushing fountains of my tears are dried,
> Save that my eyes are weak with midnight watchings,
> Straining, through tears, if haply they might see
> The signal fires, that claim'd my fix'd attention.
> If they were clos'd in sleep, a silly fly
> Would, with the slightest murmuring, make me start.

And wake me to more fears. For thy dear sake,
All this I suffer'd; but my jocund heart
Forgets it all, whilst I behold my lord,
My guardian, the strong anchor of my hope,
The stately column that supports my house.

If any suspicions, with regard to the fidelity of Clytemnestra, had existed in the mind of Agamemnon, the above speech, so expressive of the warm and devoted attachment of a fond and affectionate wife, would have removed all, and silenced every whisper of jealousy. The mighty genius of Shakespeare himself, intimately as he was acquainted with all the avenues to the human heart, would have found it difficult to have devised a speech better calculated to lull suspicion. It has the desired effect; Agamemnon enters his palace in all the pomp of triumph, and throwing himself completely in her power, falls a victim to the murderous dagger of Clytemnestra. After having committed the horrid deed, and whilst her hands are yet reeking with a husband's blood, she avows it in the following language:

——————— when the heart conceives
Thoughts of deep vengeance on a foe, what means
To achieve the deed more certain, than to wear
The form of friendship, and with circling wiles
Inclose them in the insuperable net?
——————— I struck him twice, and twice
He groan'd, then died. A third time as he lay
I gor'd him with a wound; a grateful present
To the stern god, that in realms below
Reigns o'er the dead; there let him take his seat.
He lay, and spouting from his wounds a stream
Of blood, bedewed me with his crimson drops.
I glory in them, like the genial earth
When the warm showers of heaven descend and wake
The flowrets to unfold their vermiel leaves.

Her bold and daring character, spurning all control and careless of consequences, is further exhibited in her reply to the chorus:

Chorus. We are astonished at thy daring words
Thus vaunting o'er the ruins of thy husband.
Clytem. Me, like a witless woman, would thou fright?
I tell thee, my firm soul disdains to fear.
Be thou dispos'd to applaud or censure me,
I reck not; there Agamemnon lies,
My husband slaughter'd by this hand; I dare
Avow his death and justify the deed.

The character in the modern drama, which approaches nearest to that of Clytemnestra, is Lady Macbeth—the same contempt of danger and steadiness of purpose mark both. Another important and interesting character is *Cassandra*, daughter of Priam and Hecuba, who received from Apollo the gift of prophecy. In the division of the spoils of Troy, Cassandra fell to the share of Agamemnon, and accompanied him to Argos. She is there inspired with the spirit of prophecy, and foretells her own death, which she meets with the firmness worthy the daughter of Priam and the sister of the noble Hector.

Such though it be, I enter, to bewail
My fate, and Agamemnon's. To have liv'd
Let it suffice. And think not, gen'rous strangers,
Like the poor bird that flutters o'er the bough,
Through fear I linger. But my dying words
You will remember, when her blood shall flow
For mine, woman's for woman's; and the man's
For his that falls by his accursed wife.
Chorus. Thy fate, poor sufferer, fills my eyes with tears.
Cassandra. Yet once more let me raise my mournful voice.
Thou sun, whose rising beams shall bless no more
These closing eyes! you, whose vindictive rage
Hangs o'er my hated murderers, oh, avenge me,
Though, a poor slave, I fall an easy prey!
This is the state of man: in prosperous fortune
A shadow, passing light, throws to the ground
Joy's baseless fabric; in adversity
Comes malice with a sponge moistened in gall,
And wipes each beauteous character away:
More than the first this melts my soul to pity.

The foregoing extracts will serve, in some degree, to exhibit the train of thought that characterised the dramatic genius of Æschylus, and the peculiar spirit which animated him in all his dramatic efforts. He lived in the time of the Persian war, and had himself been distinguished for deeds of arms; hence his great object was to animate his countrymen, and keep alive the heroic fire which warmed their forefathers; he, therefore, selected his characters from the heroic sages, and depicted vigorous and free minds, superior to fear, devoted to their country, and greedy of glory on the field of battle.

Notwithstanding his high reputation, when the tragedy of the "Furies" was represented, his enemies charged him with impiety, and would, probably, have put him to death, had it not been

for the intercession of his brother Amynias. This event made such an impression on his mind, that he retired to the court of Hiero, king of Sicily, where he died in the sixty-ninth year of his age. The Athenians decreed public honors to his memory.

Æschylus was succeeded by *Sophocles* and *Euripides*, two equally celebrated names in dramatic history. Sophocles, at the death of Æschylus, was in the twenty-seventh year of his age, and like him was distinguished for his valor in several battles; indeed, having attained the dignity of Archon, he commanded the Athenian armies on several occasions, with considerable reputation. He first applied himself to lyric poetry, and on his "sounding lyre" celebrated the victories of his countrymen. Having been successful in a poetic contest, instituted by the Athenians to celebrate the conquest of the island of Scyros, in which Æschylus is said to have been a competitor, he devoted the remainder of his days to the cultivation of poetry, in which he was eminently successful, having obtained the prize twenty different times. The splendid triumph which he gained over Æschylus, greatly increased his reputation, and gave him the empire of the stage, until disputed by Euripides. Sophocles was the author of one hundred and twenty tragedies, only seven of which are extant. The style of Sophocles was compared by his contemporaries, to the honey of the bee for sweetness, hence he obtained the name of the "Bee." His children, anxious to become possessed of his estate, charged him with insanity before the Areopagus. The poet appeared before his judges, and by way of defence read his last tragedy of "Œdipus at Colonos," in which he represents, in the most glowing colors, the conduct of ungrateful children, and then inquired of his judges, whether the author of such a production could justly be charged with insanity. He was acquitted, to the shame and confusion of his children, and was conducted home amidst the acclamations of the people. Sophocles lived near one hundred years in the full enjoyment of his faculties, and died through excess of joy, when the prize was decreed to "Œdipus," the last play he exhibited. The following beautiful verses on his death, translated from the Greek by Addison, cannot fail to please every reader of taste:

Wind, gentle evergreen, to form a shade,
Around the tomb where Sophocles is laid;
Sweet ivy wind thy boughs and intertwine

With blushing roses and the clustering vine;
Thus will thy lasting leaves, with beauties hung
Prove grateful emblems of the lays he sung;
Whose soul exalted like a god of wit
Among the muses and the graces writ.

The tragedy of "Œdipus Tyrannus," exhibits the dramatic powers of Sophocles, to as great advantage as any other of his works that have reached us. It is founded upon the story of the murder of Laius, king of Thebes, by his son Œdipus, and the subsequent marriage of Œdipus with his own mother Jocasta, the fruitful sources of many and dire calamities to him and his unhappy family. When the play opens, all Thebes is in commotion, in consequence of a dreadful pestilence which was laying waste the land; people of all ranks are thronging to the temple of Jupiter, and supplicating at his altar the favor of the Deity. Œdipus is informed by Creon, who has just returned from Delphi, that the cause of the pestilence is the murderer of Laius, and that before it ceases, he must be discovered and driven from the country. Œdipus, alive to the miseries of the people, determines to use every means to discover the murderer. By the advice of Creon, he sends for a blind and aged prophet named *Tiresius*, whowas looked on as one to whom all futurity was known:

"———— as among the gods
All knowing Phœbus, so to mortal men
Doth sage Tiresias, in foreknowledge sure
Shine forth preeminent ————."

Tiresias being brought before Œdipus, hesitates to declare what he knows, and says,

You know not what you ask; I'll not unveil
Your miseries to you. I will not make
Myself and thee unhappy.

Still urged, he reluctantly declares that Œdipus himself is the murderer,

The guilty cause of all the city's woes.

And adds that he is

"———— in shameful bonds united
With those he loves, unconscious of his guilt
Is yet most guilty. ————"

This declaration of Tiresias, excites the rage of Œdipus, and causes a quarrel between him and Creon, who he believes has induced the prophet thus to speak, in order that the commission of the crime being fixed on him, Creon may succeed to the crown. The character of Œdipus is drawn with a masterly hand, and we cannot but feel deeply interested for him in his various and trying afflictions. The scene between Œdipus and Jocasta, when he informs her of the declaration of Tiresias, is one of peculiar and striking interest.

Œd. ——— Creon says
That I did murder Laius.
Joc. ——— spake he this
As knowing it himself, or from another?
Œd. He had suborned that evil working priest;
And sharpens every tongue against his king.
Joc. Let not a fear perplex thee, Œdipus;
Mortals know nothing of futurity,
And these prophetic seers are all impostors;
I'll prove it to thee; know then, Laius once,
Not from Apollo, but his priests, received
An oracle which said, it was decreed
He should be slain by his own son, the offspring
Of Laius and Jocasta; yet he fell
By strangers; murder'd, so fame reports,
By robbers in the place where three roads meet:
A son was born, but ere three days had past
The infant's feet were bored; a servant took
And left him on the pathless mountain's top
To perish there; thus Phœbus ne'er decreed
That he should kill his father, or that Laius,
Which much he fear'd, should by his son be slain.

This speech of Jocasta, instead of removing the fears of Œdipus, tends to confirm them; the time, the place, the description of the person of Laius, and the subsequent introduction of the shepherd, to whom Œdipus was delivered when an infant, cause him to break forth in the following pathetic language:

O me! at length the mystery 's unravelled
'T is plain; 't is clear; my fate is all determin'd:
Those are my parents who should not have been
Allied to me; she is my wife, e'en she
Whom nature had forbidden me to wed;
I have slain him who gave me life, and now
Of thee, O light! I take my last farewell;
For Œdipus shall ne'er behold thee more.

The death of Jocasta by her own hand, is thus described:

Messenger. ——— the queen
Divine Jocasta 's dead.
Cho. Jocasta dead! say by what hand?
Mess. ——— her own;
And what 's more dreadful, none saw the deed.
What I myself beheld you all shall hear:
Inflam'd with rage, soon as she reach'd the palace,
Instant retiring to the nuptial bed,
She shut the door, then rav'd and tore her hair,
Call'd out on Laius dead, and bade him think
On that unhappy son who murder'd him,
And stain'd his bed: then turning her sad eyes
Upon the guilty couch, she curs'd the place
Where she had borne a husband from her husband,
And children from her child; what follow'd then
I know not, by the cries of Œdipus
Prevented, for on him our eyes were fix'd
Attentive.

We might produce many more extracts from this tragedy, of peculiar beauty, but enough has been given for our purpose. Throughout this drama, the author seems to have had in view, to impress upon the mind, that whatever is decreed by Divine Providence, must inevitably come to pass, notwithstanding every human means may be employed to counteract its designs; and he concludes with the following sentiment:

Let mortals hence be taught to look beyond
The present time, nor dare to say, a man
Is happy, till the last decisive hour
Shall close his life without the taste of wo.

Euripides was born at Salamis, the day on which the army of Xerxes was defeated by the Greeks. He was the pupil of Socrates, the celebrated philosopher, but being more attached to poetry than philosophy, he left the groves of the academy and the banks of the Illyssus, and entered the temple of the muses, where he offered his devotions to Melpomene. When engaged in the composition of his tragedies, he frequently retired from the noise and bustle of the busy world, to a dreary and solitary cave in the neighborhood of Salamis. He is represented to have been proud, haughty, self-assuming and fond of contention. When requested by the audience to strike out some offensive lines in one of his plays, he came forward on the stage and told them, that he came to instruct them, not to receive instruction.

Between Euripides and Sophocles, a bitter enmity, it is said, subsisted, which originated with the former, on account of his extreme jealousy of the talents and rising fame of the latter. This enmity led Aristophanes to introduce them both in some of his comedies, in which he ridiculed them with success and humor. The following judgment, with regard to these two dramatic writers, has been pronounced by a learned and judicious critic. "Euripides is esteemed more tender than Sophocles, and he is fuller of moral sentiments. But in the conduct of his plays, he is more incorrect and negligent; his expositions, or openings of the subject, are made in a less artful manner, and the songs of his chorus, though remarkably poetical, have, commonly, less connexion with the main subject, than those of Sophocles. Both Euripides and Sophocles are elegant and beautiful in their style; just for the most part, in their thoughts, they speak with the voice of nature; and, making allowance for the difference of ancient and modern ideas, in the midst of all their simplicity, they are both touching and interesting."*

Aristophanes, in his comedy of the "Frogs," introduces Æschylus and Euripides as contending for preeminence among the departed spirits; the contest is continued for some time, but is at length so managed, as to be decided in favor of the former. Æschylus is evidently the favorite of the poet, and he next ranks Sophocles, as appears from the following speech of Æschylus to Pluto:

> ——————— do thou to Sophocles
> Consign my seat, to keep possession of it,
> In case I should not again return; for he
> Doubtless, comes nearest me in tragic powers.

And again, in a scene between Xanthias and Æachus; the latter being asked why Sophocles did not put in his claim for the first rank in tragedy, replies:

> ——————— not he, by Jove!
> When hither he came down, he instantly
> Embraced Æschylus, shook him by the hand,
> And in his favor gave up all pretensions.

The few tragedies of Euripides now extant, have been trans-

* Blair's Lectures, p. 471.

lated into English by Potter. From his tragedy of "Iphigenia in Aulis," we will make a few extracts, for the purpose of showing something of the genius and style of the author, so far as they can be exhibited in a translation, affording, at the same time, an opportunity of comparing the style and manner of the three great tragic poets of Greece. This tragedy is founded upon the sacrifice of the daughter by Agamemnon, to appease the wrath of Diana, whom he had offended; the oracle having declared, that the Grecian fleet would not be permitted to reach the Trojan coast, unless this sacrifice was offered. Agamemnon had been prevailed upon to send to Argos for his daughter, under pretence of giving her in marriage to Achilles; but afterwards repenting his determination, and feeling a return of that natural affection which prompts a parent to protect his offspring, he endeavors to prevent her coming; his schemes, however, are detected by the vigilance of his brother Menelaus, and disappointment ensues. Iphigenia and her mother Clytemnestra, arrive at Aulis, but instead of being united to Achilles, the former learns that her innocent blood is to be shed upon the altar of Diana.

The play opens with a dialogue between Agamemnon and an attendant, whom he determines to despatch to Argos with a letter to Clytemnestra, in which he says:

> Whate'er my former letter gave in charge,
> Daughter of Leda, this I write to thee,
> That to Eubœa's winding bay thou send not
> Thy daughter, nor to Aulis rising high
> Above the waves; for to some other time
> The nuptials of thy virgin daughter we defer.

The messenger is detected by Menelaus, and the letter wrested from his hands. Menelaus reproaches Agamemnon for his "secret baseness:"

> ——————— when thou cam'st to Aulis, with the troops
> Of Greece in arms, to nothing didst thou sink,
> Astonish'd at thy fortune, by the gods
> Denied a gale to swell thy sails. The Greeks
> Required thee to dismiss the ships, nor toil
> In vain at Aulis; how dejected then
> Thy visage, thy confusion then how great
> Not to command the thousand ships, and fill
> The fields of Priam with embattled hosts?
> Me then thou didst address; what shall I do,
> Or what expedient find, of this command,

Of this high honor not to be deprived?
When Chalcas at the hallow'd rites declar'd
That to Diana thou must sacrifice
Thy daughter, and the Grecians then should sail,
With joy thy thoughts were heighten'd, willingly
The virgin as a victim didst thou promise,
And freely, not by force, (urge not that plea,)
Dost thou despatch a message to thy wife
To send thy daughter hither, the pretence
Her nuptials with Achilles. But thy mind
Was soon averse, and secretly devised
Letters of different import; now in sooth,
Thou wilt not be the murderer of thy daughter.

When informed by a messenger of the arrival of his daughter, the unhappy father laments his hard fate in the following beautiful and pathetic language:

——————— In what a chain of fate
Am I enfolded? Fortune, wiser far
Than all my vain designs, hath closely wrought
Beneath me. What advantages attend
Ignoble birth? They are allowed to weep,
And utter sad complaints; but to the noble
This is denied; led by the pride of rank
Which rules us, to the people we are slaves.
——————— how shall I address
My wife, or how receive her? For all my former ills,
Coming unbidden, she hath added weight
Of new distress; yet decency required
Her presence with her daughter, to attend
Her nuptials, and present the dearest gifts:
There will she find me false. But thee, O thee,
Unhappy bride, (bride call I thee! how soon
To Pluto to be wedded!) how I pity!
Methinks I hear her suppliant voice thus speak:
"My father, wilt thou kill me? May'st thou make
Thyself such nuptials, and whoe'er to thee
Is dear." ———————
Unhappy me! what ruin hath the son
Of Priam brought on me!

There is much of the simplicity of nature in the first interview between Agamemnon and Iphigenia:

Iph. My father, to thy arms I wish to run,
Clasp'd to thy bosom; dear to me thy sight
After such absence: be not angry with me.
Agu. Enjoy thy wish: of all my children thou
Hast of thy father been most fond.
Iph. Absent so long, with joy I look on thee.
Agu. And I on thee: so this is mutual joy.

Clytemnestra having learnt from a servant of her house, the determination of Agamemnon to sacrifice his daughter, to appease the rage of the goddess Diana, endeavors to dissuade him from his purpose, but without effect, although aided by the pathetic and eloquent appeal of Iphigenia:

Had I, my father, the persuasive voice
Of Orpheus, and his skill to charm the rocks
To follow me, and soothe whome'er I please
With winning words, I would make trial of it;
But I have nothing to present thee now,
Save tears, my only eloquence, and these
I can present thee. ——————
——— Ah! kill me not in youth's fresh prime,
Sweet is the light of heaven: compel me not
What is beneath to view. I was the first
To call thee father, me thou first didst call
Thy child: I was the first that on thy knees
Fondly caress'd thee, and from thee received
The fond caress: This was thy speech to me:
Shall I, my child, e'er see thee in some house
Of splendor, happy in thy husband, live
And flourish as becomes my dignity?
My speech to thee was, leaning against thy cheek,
Which with my hand I now caress, and what
Shall I then do for thee? Shall I receive
My father when grown old, and in my house
Cheer him with each fond office, to repay
The careful nurture which he gave my youth?
These words are on my memory deep impress'd,
Thou hast forgot them and wilt kill thy child.

To this speech so affecting, and so well calculated to touch the heart of the most obdurate, Agamemnon replies:

—————— to dare this, is dreadful to me,
And not to dare it, is as dreadful. I perforce
Must do it. What a naval camp is here
You see, how many kings of Greece array'd
In glittering arms; to Illium's towers are these
Denied to advance, unless I offer thee
A victim; thus the prophet Chalcas speaks.

Iphigenia is led to the altar, and as Chalcas is about to strike the fatal blow, she suddenly disappears, and a goat of uncommon size and beauty, is found in her stead.

—————— the sons of Atreus stood,
And all the host, fix'd on the ground their eyes.
The priest then took his sword, preferr'd his prayer,
And with his eye mark'd where to give the blow,

——————when sudden to the view
A wonder; for the stroke each clearly heard,
But where the virgin was none knew; aloud
The priest exclaims, and all the host with shouts
Rifted the air, beholding from some god
A prodigy, which struck their wondering eyes
Surpassing faith when seen; for on the ground
Panting was laid a hind of largest bulk,
In form excelling; with its spouting blood
Much was the altar of the goddess dew'd.

Euripides having incurred the displeasure of his own countrymen, retired to the court of Archelaus, king of Macedonia, who honored him with his favor and friendship. His end was unfortunate, having been devoured by dogs in the seventy-eighth year of his age. When the news of his death was received at Athens, Sophocles, who was about to exhibit one of his tragedies, notwithstanding their mutual enmity, appeared in mourning, and made his actors come on the stage without crowns. The Athenians requested his bones from Archelaus, that they might bestow upon them the rites of an honorable burial. Archelaus, desirous of preserving in Macedonia the remains of so distinguished a man, refused their request. The Athenians afterwards raised a cenotaph to his memory.*

After the time of the three great poets, we have thus briefly noticed, no other tragic poet of distinction rose in Greece. The poetic talents of succeeding writers appear to have been exclusively directed to comedy, and Thalia assumed the seat of Melpomene.

* Potter's trans. of the works of Eschylus and Euripides. Anachar. Travels, vol 6. Potter's Grec. Ant. Cours de Litterature par La Harpe. Francklin's Sophocles. Lempreire's Class. Dic. Gillie's Greece. Mitford's Greece. Plutarch's Lives.

CHAPTER IV.

Literature of the Greeks. Greek comedy—the old, the middle and the new: Eupolis, Cratinus, Aristophanes, Crates, Alexis, Antiphanes, Menander, Philemon. Pastoral poetry: Theocritus, Appolonius Rhodius.

WHAT is properly called comedy, is supposed to have been invented by *Epicharmus*, a Pythagorean philosopher of Syracuse, who flourished about four hundred and sixty years before the birth of Christ. Although a philosopher, he cultivated the garden of polite literature, and was the author of about forty comedies, most of which were distinguished for a refined morality, and were selected as models for imitation by Plautus, a celebrated Roman comic writer.

Greek comedy was divided into the *old*, the *middle* and the *new*. In the first it was common to represent on the stage known individuals by name, who happened to be remarkable either for their follies or their vices, any peculiarity of outward demeanor, or for their moral doctrines and opinions in philosophy. To repress this license, thus freely indulged, in which, to gratify personal feeling, the most illustrious and distinguished characters were introduced in ludicrous situations, laws were enacted, forbidding the mention of the names of living persons, which gave rise to what was called the *middle comedy*. The comic poets, being thus prohibited from introducing and holding up to ridicule, the names and characters of living individuals, adopted a plan, that by means of masks, dress and imitation of gesture and manner, they so plainly designated the persons intended to be satirized, that they were at once recognised. This was distinguished by the name of the *middle comedy*. The public rulers perceiving that the poets thus eluded the law which forbade the mention of names, and which was designed to protect the characters and feelings of individuals from wanton and malicious attacks, found it necessary to enact another, banishing from the stage all allusion to individuals, and restricting the representation to the delineation and exposition of general manners. This was called the *new comedy*. We now design to notice the most distinguished

poets, in these several departments or divisions of ancient comedy.

In the *old comedy*, Cratinus, Eupolis, and Aristophanes, were contemporaries and competitors for the comic wreath. They each enjoyed a high reputation, but *Aristophanes* appears to have been the most successful candidate, having been distinguished by the title of "Prince of the old comedy." During the period of their rivalship, the magistracy prohibited the representation of comedies at Athens, which was in force two years. When *Enthymenas* was chosen archon, he revoked the edict, and Thalia was reinstated in her honors by the abovementioned comic poets, who were in high favor with the people, on account of the boldness with which they attacked, and the severity with which they lashed, the vices and follies of the times, and particularly of certain elevated individuals.

Eupolis atque Cratinus, Aristophanesque poetæ,
Atque alii, quorum comœdia prisca virorum est,
Si quis erat dignus describi, quod malus, aut fur,
Quod mœchus foret, aut sicarius, aut alioqui
Famosus; multa cum libertate notabant.

Hor. Lib. 1, *Sat.* 4.

The comic poets in its earliest age,
Who form'd the manners of the Grecian stage.
Was there a villain who might justly claim
A better right of being damn'd to fame;
Rake, cut-throat, thief, whatever was his crime,
They freely stigmatized the wretch in rhyme. *Francis.*

Cratinus was an Athenian by birth; he composed thirty comedies, which were distinguished for a lively and highly ornamented style; scarcely a single fragment, however, is now to be found. He lived to the great age of ninety-seven, notwithstanding he led a dissipated life. He was greatly addicted to wine, so much so, that he asserted no author could be good for any thing, who did not love his bottle, and offer frequent libations to Bacchus. It is to him Horace alludes in his epistle to Mæcenas:

Prisco si credis, Mæcenas docte, Cratino,
Nulla placere diu nec vivere carmina possunt,
Quæ scribuntur aquæ potoribus. *Hor. Ep.* 19.

To sage Cratinus if you credit give,
No water-drinker's verses long shall live,
Or long shall please. ——— *Francis.*

The last dramatic production of Cratinus was a comedy, entitled "The Flagon," which he wrote in consequence of an attack made upon him by Aristophanes, in one of his comedies, in which he was held up to ridicule in consequence of his excessive love of wine. In this comedy Cratinus contrived to turn the laugh against Aristophanes, who was himself a devotee of the jolly god. In his comic writings he is said to have possessed the severity of Archilochus and the energy of Æschylus. Cratinus died in the ninety-seventh year of his age.

Eupolis was also an Athenian, and exhibited great dramatic powers at a very early age. He is said to have written seventeen comedies before he attained the age of seventeen years—an effort of genius seldom, if ever, equalled. He soon became a popular writer, and the boldness of his satire, which was levelled at the vicious and profligate characters of Athens, recommended him to public esteem. The manner of his death is uncertain; it is supposed, however, that some of those persons, whose vices he had exposed in his comedies, suborned assassins to throw him into the Hellespont, and even Alcibiades, whom he had satirized, is suspected for having been concerned in the plot. He was the author of about twenty comedies, of the greater part of which little more than the titles have been preserved.

Aristophanes was born in the island of Rhodes, but went early to Athens, where he subsequently distinguished himself as a comic poet and received the olive crown in a public assembly. In private life he is represented to have been free and open in his temper, of a social disposition, and intemperate in the use of wine—a vice from which, however, very few in his time, could claim exemption. He was one of the most popular men in Athens, and his fame soon spread abroad. "The comedies of Aristophanes," says a competent judge, "are of a mixed species; sometimes personal, at other times inclining to parody; he varies and accommodates his style to his subject and the speakers; on some occasions it is elevated, grave, sublime and polished; on others it sinks and descends into humble dialogue, provincial rusticity and coarse obscenity. In some passages he starts out of the ordinary province of comedy, into the loftiest flights of poetry, in which he is scarcely surpassed by Æschylus or Pindar." Aristophanes was the author of above fifty comedies, of

which only eleven have come down to us. In one of them, "The Clouds," he attacked Socrates, the celebrated philosopher, by bringing him upon the stage, and exposing his person and character to ridicule. Socrates was present at the representation of this play, at the time when the theatre was crowded with strangers, and in a great degree destroyed the intended effect of the piece by his magnanimity. When the person representing Socrates came forward, observing the anxiety of the strangers to know the person the poet meant to satirize, the philosopher, with great coolness, rose up and continued standing during the remainder of the performance. It was in consequence of this attack upon Socrates, that the law prohibiting the representation of living characters upon the stage was enacted.

The principal object of Aristophanes in "The Clouds," appears to have been, to expose the doctrines taught by Socrates, although he sometimes hints at his personal infirmities. He is introduced upon the stage, suspended in a basket, and is accosted by *Strepsiades*, a wild fellow, who has been in conversation with some of the disciples of the philosopher:

Strep. Hoa! Socrates—what hoa, my little Socrates!
Soc. Mortal, how now! thou insect of a day,
What would'st thou?
Strep. I would know what thou art doing.
Soc. I tread in air, contemplating the sun.
Strep. Oh! then I see you're baskettd so high
That you look down upon the gods—good hope
You 'll lower a peg on earth.
Soc. Sublime in air,
Sublime in thought, I carry my mind with me,
Its cogitations all assimilated
To the pure atmosphere, in which I float;
Lower me to earth, and my mind's subtle powers,
Seized by contagious dulness, lose their spirit;
For the dry earth drinks up the generous sap,
The vegetating vigor of philosophy,
And leaves it a mere husk.
Strep. What do you say?
Philosophy has sapt your vigor? Fie upon it.
But come, my precious fellow, come down quickly
And teach me those fine things I 'm here in quest of.
Soc. And what fine things are they?
Strep. A new receipt
For sending off my creditors, and foiling them
By the art logical; for you shall know
By debts, pawns, pledges, usuries, executions,
I am racked and rent in tatters.

Socrates inquires of Strepsiades, if he is desirous of being instructed in "celestial matters," and being answered in the affirmative, he commences the ceremony of initiation:

Keep silence then, and listen to a prayer,
Which fits the gravity of age to hear—
Oh air, all powerful air, which dost enfold
This pendant globe, thou vault of flaming gold,
Ye sacred clouds, who bid the thunder roll,
Shine forth, approach, and cheer your suppliant's soul!
Strep. Hold! keep 'em off a while, till I am ready.
Ah luckless me, would I had bro't my bonnet
And so escaped a soaking.
Soc. Fly swift ye clouds, and give yourselves to view!
Whether on high Olympus' sacred top
Snow crown'd ye sit, or in the azure vales
Of your own father Ocean sporting weave
Your misty dance, or dip your golden urns
In the seven mouths of Nile; whether ye dwell
On Thracian Mimas, or Mæotis' lake
Hear me, yet hear, and thus invok'd approach!

A large cloud is seen floating in the air, from which a song is heard, at the conclusion of which, Socrates says,

Yes, ye divinities, whom I adore,
I hail you now propitious to my prayer,
Did'st thou not hear, then speak in thunder to me—
Strep. And I too am your cloudship's most obedient
And under sufferance trump against your thunder.—
Nay, take it how you may, my frights and fears
Have pinch'd and cholick'd my poor bowels so,
That I can't choose but treat their holy nostrils
With an unsavoury sacrifice.
Soc. Forbear
These gross scurrilities, for low buffoons
And mountebanks more fitting. Hush! be still,
List to the chorus of their heavenly voices,
For music is the language they delight in.

Much in the same strain, the author continues his satire upon Socrates, to the conclusion of the piece. Aristophanes possessed such boldness and independence of character, that he never swerved from his purpose from fear of consequences. He assailed the powerful as well as the weak, whenever he believed their conduct merited censure. He attacked Cleon in a piece abounding with the bitterest satire, but as he could find no workman who would make a mask to represent him, or performer who would undertake the part, he appeared upon the stage

himself, with his face smeared with wine lees, and the multitude applauded, although Cleon was then at the height of his power, and even adored by the populace.*

Besides the writers of the old comedy we have mentioned, there were others of inferior note. *Amipsias* was contemporary with Aristophanes; of his comedies we have the titles of ten, and judging therefrom, they appear to have been directed against the prevailing follies and vices of the age—at all times fit subjects for the pen of the satirist.

Crates was also contemporary with Cratinus and Aristophanes. He was at first a principal actor in the plays of Cratinus, but afterwards turned his attention to comedy, and produced more than twenty plays, distinguished for their lively sallies of wit, and their exemption from offensive personalities. Of his works a few fragments only remain; the following translation of one of them "On old age," is from the pen of Cumberland.

> These shrivell'd sinews and this bending frame,
> The workmanship of time's strong hand proclaim;
> Skill'd to reverse whate'er the gods create,
> And make that crooked which they fashion straight.
> Hard choice for man to die—or else to be
> That tottering, wretched, wrinkled thing you see:
> Age then we all prefer; for age we pray,
> And travel on to life's last lingering day;
> Then sinking slowly down from worse to worse,
> Find Heaven's extorted boon, our greatest curse.

About this period also flourished *Pherecrates*, who is said to have written twenty-one comedies, in a style of the purest Attic. He invented a kind of verse which was distinguished by the name of *Pherecratian*. This poet was the personal friend of Plato, the philosopher.

The writers of the *middle comedy* were numerous, not less than thirty were celebrated; of their respective merits, however, we have but little opportunity of forming any judgment, as all their productions have perished, except a few fragments. Cumberland has collected many of these fragments in his "Observer," and has translated them with taste, spirit and elegance. Among the most distinguished comic poets of the middle comedy, was *Alexis*, a native of Thurium, in Magna Græcia, which comprehended the southern parts of Italy. He is said to have written

* Mitchel's Aristophanes. Edin Ency. Anachar. Travels, vol. VI. 25.

no less than two hundred and forty-five comedies, which Plutarch says were "crowned with the trophies of success, and triumphed in the plaudits of the theatre."

Prolific as the muse of Alexis appears to have been, that of *Antiphanes* of Smyrna, was more so, having produced, according to some writers, two hundred and ninety comedies, according to others three hundred and sixty-five, a number equalled among modern dramatists only, by Lope de Vega, a Spanish writer of the 16th century, who is said to have written eighteen hundred dramatic pieces. Antiphanes gained the prize with thirty comedies. Of the works of this author, nothing but a few fragments remain, which were scattered through the works of others, but have been collected in a work entitled "Poetæ Minores Græci." From these few fragments it is impossible to form a correct judgment of his peculiar merits as a comic writer. In one of his comedies, a part of which is preserved by Athenæus, (who composed a miscellaneous work, in which were collected many anecdotes of ancient authors, and many scattered pieces of poetry,) is described a singular contrivance of the king of Cyprus to cool his chamber.

——— This monarch when he sups
Is fann'd by living doves. ———
There is a juice drawn from the Carpen tree,
To which your dove is instantly wedded
With a most loving appetite; with this
The king anoints his temples, and the odour
No sooner captivates the silly birds,
Than straight they flutter round him, nay, would fly
A bolder pitch, so strong a love-charm draws them,
And perch, O horror! on his sacred crown;
If that such profanation were permitted
Of the bystanders, who, with reverend care
Fright them away, till thus retreating now
And now advancing, they keep such a coil
With their broad vans, and beat the lazy air
Into so quick a stir, that in the conflict
His royal lungs are comfortably cool'd,
And thus he sups as Pathian monarchs should.

This extract, we think, affords a favorable specimen of the style of composition and train of thought, which distinguish his comic writings, and judging from it, we may fairly infer, that his powers were of no common order.

Anaxandrides of Rhodes, was the author of sixty-five comedies, with ten of which he gained prizes in public contests. A

few fragments only of his numerous productions, have been preserved, and from them no certain opinion can be formed of his claims to eminence. He appears to have destroyed in his fits of passion, to which he was greatly addicted, some of his best comedies. To the middle comedy also belong *Epicrates* of Ambrasia, and *Eubulus* of Atama in the island of Lesbos, who is said to have written fifty comedies, and to have been one of the most celebrated poets of his age. In his comedy of the "Cup Bearers," he puts the following language in the mouth of Bacchus:

Three cups of wine a prudent man may take;
The first of these for constitution's sake;
The second to the girl he loves the best;
The third and last to lull him to his rest,
Then home to bed! but if a fourth he pours,
That is the cup of folly, and not ours;
Loud noisy talking on the fifth attends;
The sixth breeds feuds and falling out of friends;
Seven begets blows and faces stain'd with gore;
Eight, and the watch-patrol breaks ope the door;
Mad with the ninth, another cup goes round
And the swill'd sot drops senseless to the ground.

The above lines contain maxims well worth attention at the present day, and were they observed, society would have to deplore fewer wrecks of genius.

With *Menander* commences the *new comedy*, distinguished from the old by being superior to it in delicacy, regularity and decorum, and avoiding or refraining from all attacks upon living characters. The writers of the new comedy attacked the vices and follies of the age, regardless of the garb which covered them, in the fearless spirit of bold invective. Menander was born and flourished two hundred and eighty years before Christ. He was educated by *Theophrastus*, a philosopher of the school of Aristotle. At an early age he began to write for the stage, and his comedies soon acquired a high reputation for their elegant language, refined wit and judicious observations, so different from his predecessors in the old and middle comedy.

The very bees, oh sweet Menander, hung
To hear the muses lisp upon thy tongue;
The very graces made the scenes you writ
Their happy point of pure expression hit,
Thus still you live; you make your Athens shine
And raise its glory to the skies in thine."

The united voice of Greece conferred upon *Menander* the proud title of "Prince of the New Comedy," as upon Aristophanes it had before conferred that of "Prince of the Old Comedy." Of one hundred comedies written by him, only a few fragments have survived the ravages of time, which exhibit him rather as a gloomy and morose misanthrope, than possessing any amiable and social qualities, or as the

"Gay Menander charming each youthful heart."

His discontented and misanthropic disposition may be fairly inferred from the following fragment, translated by Cumberland:

Suppose some god should say: Die when thou wilt,
Mortal, expect another life on earth;
And for that life make choice of all creation,
What wilt thou be; dog, sheep, goat, man or horse;
For live again thou must; it is thy fate;
Choose only what form; then thou art free—
So help me Cato, I would fairly answer—
Let me be all things, any thing but man!
He only of all creatures feels affliction.
——————— But what is man?
Truth, virtue, valor, how do they avail him?
Of this world's good, the first and greatest share
Is flattery's prize; the informer takes the next,
And barefaced knavery garbles what is left.
I 'd rather be an ass than what I am,
And see these villains lord it o'er their betters."

Aristophanes was the head of the old, and Menander of the new comedy, and being thus distinguished, they have had their respective advocates and admirers. Plutarch has drawn a parallel between these two great comic poets, in which he gives his judgment in favor of Menander. Of the justice of his decision we have no sufficient means of judging at the present day, so small a portion of the writings, at least of one of them, having reached us. Of Menander, he says, that he knew how to adapt his style and language to the character represented, and at the same time preserving the truly comic—that he never lost sight of nature, and that his comedies may be read and may be seen represented with equal satisfaction, affording pleasure in all places and under all circumstances. On the other hand, he represents Aristophanes, as going beyond nature, and adopting language calculated rather to please the populace, than correct

the manners, and gratify men of taste and refinement—that his style is very unequal, sometimes elevated even to bombast, and immediately descending to low buffoonery, and disgusting puerilities.

A victim of discontent, Menander drowned himself in the Peræan sea, in the 52d year of his age.

Philemon was contemporary with Menander, and is said to have triumphed over him several times in trials of poetic skill. The vanity of Menander would not permit him to believe that the victory was obtained by fair means, and he is said to have accosted him thus—"Do you not blush, Philemon, when you prevail over me?" Philemon was born at Syracuse, and lived to the great age of one hundred and one years, and composed ninety comedies. The fragments of his writings which have reached us, are, in general, of a tender and sentimental cast, breathing a soft and placid spirit, and in no instance exhibiting the gloomy misanthropy of Menander. The following fragment of Philemon, is of an opposite character from that of his rival, quoted above:

Philosophers consume much time and pains
To seek the sovereign good, nor is there one
Who yet hath struck upon it; virtue some
And prudence some contend for, whilst the knot
Grows harder by their struggle to untie it.
I, a mere clown, in turning up the soil
Have dug the secret forth—all gracious Jove!
'T is peace, most lovely and all beloved;
Peace is the bounteous goddess, who bestows
Weddings and holidays, and joyous feasts,
Relations, friends, health, plenty, social comforts,
And pleasures which alone make life a blessing.

Besides the writers above named, were *Diphilus*, a native of Sinope, a city of Pontus; *Apollodorus*, a native of Gela in Sicily; *Philipidas*, whose death was occasioned by the unexpected success of one of his comedies; and lastly, *Posidippus*, a Macedonian, born at Cassandra, and who may be reckoned the last of the comic poets.*

From what has already been said, it will be seen, that poetry in Greece, from the time of Pindar to that of Theocritus, was almost exclusively confined to the drama. No great poet in any

* Anach. Travels. Cumberland's Observer. Quint. Ins. Potter's Ant. of Greece. Cours de Litterature, tome II.

other walk appeared. This encouragement of dramatic poetry, shows the strong attachment of the people to an art, which deeply interested their feelings, and which they used great exertions to keep alive. If it were not for this almost exclusive attachment to dramatic poetry, in that fertile field of genius and talent, other poets of a different class would have arisen. It is not to be inferred, however, that dramatic literature was the only species cultivated—far from it. During the above-mentioned period flourished her greatest historians, philosophers and orators, of whom we shall hereafter speak—men who have conferred immortality on the land which gave them birth.

Pastoral poetry, although of early origin, was not much cultivated, as a distinct species, until the time of Theocritus, to whom it is indebted for the interesting form in which it is at present exhibited, not only in his own pastorals, but in those of Virgil, Gesner, Shenstone, Pope and Allan Ramsay. The scene is universally laid in the country amidst shady groves, delightful meadows and purling streams; and to render it interesting, the poet ought to possess a talent for describing the magnificent scenes of nature, which are constantly presented before him, when beyond the smoke of a crowded city, or populous town; and he ought, moreover, to be perfectly familiar with the kind of life pastoral poetry is intended to describe and illustrate. His language should be simple but refined, plain but not rude. It is thus a most interesting and agreeable form of composition, with which the best feelings of our nature mingle and harmonise. "It recals to our imagination those gay scenes and pleasing views of nature, which, commonly, are the delight of our childhood and youth; and to which, in more advanced years, the greatest part of men recur with pleasure. It exhibits to us a life, with which we are accustomed to associate ideas of peace, of leisure and of innocence; and, therefore, we readily set open our hearts to such representations as promise to banish from our thoughts the cares of the world, and to transport us into calm elysian regions."*

Theocritus, who may be called the father of pastoral poetry, flourished about two hundred and eighty years before Christ. He was born at Syracuse in Sicily. He received all the advan-

* Blair's Lec. p. 388.

tages of education the country afforded, and soon gave indications of that poetic genius, for which he was afterwards distinguished. He early turned his attention to that description of poetry which he cultivated with so much success, and which has given celebrity to his name, namely, pastoral poetry. He selected as the scene of his pastorals, the woods and plains of his native Sicily, and for his subjects, Sicilian shepherds, of whose manners and customs he gives a faithful description, exhibiting that warmth of feeling and appropriate character, which belong to the shepherd class. The pastorals of Theocritus are of three kinds; such as are strictly pastoral, descriptive of the shepherd life; those termed bucolics, in which the characters are herdsmen, and those in which fishermen are introduced. As the Sicilians were a Doric colony, the dialect he uses is the Doric, the best adapted for the description of rural scenes and rural manners. The style of Theocritus is distinguished for its natural and graceful manner and its simplicity—a simplicity, however, which sometimes degenerates into grossness and indelicacy; but, notwithstanding this defect, there is a general sweetness and harmony of numbers, and a richness of description that cannot fail to captivate. Theocritus wrote thirty idyls or pastorals, which are still extant.*

Contemporary with Theocritus, were Bion and Moschus, both pastoral poets. Bion was born at Smyrna, and Moschus at Syracuse. They both acquired much distinction, as pastoral and elegiac poets, and, as regards talents, they appear to have been considered equal. Their idyls are written in a style inferior to Theocritus for simplicity and natural description, but more delicate and refined in their language and sentiments. As elegiac poets, they do not hold as high a rank, being considered rather dull and monotonous. But few of their works remain.

Appolonius Rhodius, was a native of Naucrates in Egypt, he obtained the surname of Rhodius, because he lived some time at Rhodes. He was the pupil of Callimachus, who kept a school at Alexandria, during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, a great patron of learning. Appolonius is said to have treated his master with ingratitude, who lashed him severely in a satirical poem under the name of *Ibis*. He was at one time in the situa-

* Potter's Grec. Ant. Cours de Litterature, p. 91. Blair's Lec. 393, Lem. Class. Lic. Poetæ Min. Græci.

tion of one of the librarians of the celebrated Alexandria library. Appolonius wrote several works, none of which remain but the Argonauts, a poem in four books, founded upon the celebrated expedition of the Argonauts, for the recovery of the golden fleece.

We here close our sketch of the poets of Greece. We are well aware that many have been omitted, but it did not come within our plan to notice all; our attention has been directed to such only as we considered most distinguished in the several departments of Grecian poetry.

CHAPTER V.

Literature of the Greeks. Of the different sects of Greek philosophers. The Ionic School; Socratic; Cyrenaic; Megaric; Eliac; Academic; Peripatetic; Cynic, and Stoic.

What is now called *philosophy*, was originally denominated wisdom; its possessors were first called *wise men*, and at a subsequent period *philosophers;* an appellation, at that time, rather indicative of the pursuit, than the possession of wisdom, and said to have been first adopted by Pythagoras, the sage of Samos, in contradistiction to that of *sophists*, or *wise men*, assumed by a certain sect, at that time somewhat conspicuous, and who were arrogant and presumptuous, on account of what they conceived to be, their superior wisdom. In the early ages of the world, the discovery of any useful art, or the possession of knowledge beyond the mass of mankind, was sufficient to confer this distinctive appellation, and it was considered as particularly belonging to those who presided over, and directed the ceremonies of religion. The title was conferred, no doubt, on many who had no just claim to such preeminence.

The philosophy of the early Greeks is so involved in fable, and so mingled with the systems of other nations, that it is impossible, with any kind of precision, to ascertain in what it really consisted, or trace its progressive advances. Among those whom fabulous history has dignified with the title of philosopher,

find the name of *Prometheus*, who is known in fable as having stolen fire from heaven; he appears, however, to have been more remarkable for fraud and cunning, than any other quality. Succeeding him we find the names of *Linus*, *Orpheus* and *Musæus*, of whom we have already spoken, and who are better and more deservedly known as poets than philosophers. From all we are able to gather, after an examination of various works, we find that philosophy did not acquire a rank worthy of the name, until about 580 years before Christ, when *Thales* and *Pythagoras* flourished, the first the founder of the *Ionic*, the second of the *Italic* school.

Thales, who founded the Ionic school, and who first taught a scientific method of philosophy, was born at Miletus, a town of Ionia, and is said to have been descended from Cadmus, the celebrated founder of Thebes. Having early imbibed a love of science, he abandoned every other occupation, that he might be at liberty to pursue his favorite studies. In search of knowledge he visited the island of Crete, and afterwards travelled into Egypt, where he was initiated into all the learning of the priesthood. On his return, he established a school for the purpose of teaching his favorite doctrines in philosophy. He taught that water is the first principle of all things, by which it is supposed he meant a turbid muddy mass, from which all things are produced. The reasons for this opinion have not been satisfactorily ascertained. He taught, also, that God is the most ancient being, who has neither beginning nor end, and that all things are full of him—that the deity is the soul of the world, the source of all motion and intelligence, and that all nature is full of demons, or intelligences proceeding from God. In astronomy he taught that the stars are fiery bodies—that the moon is an opaque body, illuminated by the sun, and that the earth is a spherical body, placed in the middle of the universe. He was the first who taught in Europe the globular figure of the earth, and the nature of solar and lunar eclipses, the times of which he is even said to have been able to calculate; of his ability to do so, we much doubt, from the very nature of the system of astronomy he taught. In geometry, which he learned in Egypt, he is said to have invented several fundamental propositions, which were afterwards incorporated into the elements of Euclid. The school of Thales soon became celebrated and attracted many

disciples. The novel doctrines he taught made such an impression, and instituted such an inquiry into the nature and causes, not only of material but immaterial things, that it was subsequently divided into nine different sects, viz: the *Ionic*, (proper,) the *Socratic*, the *Cyrenaic*, the *Megaric*, the *Eliac*, the *Academic*, the *Peripatetic*, the *Cynic* and the *Stoic*.

The immediate successor of Thales in the *Ionic* school, was *Anaximander*, his friend and companion. His general doctrine differed but little from that of his master, although in some particular subjects he may have deviated. He was the first who delineated on a globe or map, the surface of the earth, and marked the divisions of land and water. Like his master he taught, that the stars are fiery bodies, but that they are inhabited and animated by portions of the divinity; and that the sun occupies the highest place in the heavens, the moon the next, and the planets and fixed stars the lowest.

To him succeeded *Anaximenes*, a Milesian, who was born about 556 years before Christ. He taught that the first principle of all things is *air*, which, animated with a divine principle, is the origin of all beings; that the sun and moon are fiery bodies, whose form is that of a circular plate; that the stars are fiery substances fixed in the heavens, and that the earth is a plane table resting upon air. The successor of Anaximenes was *Anaxagoras*, who was born about 500 years before Christ, at Clazomene, a city of Ionia. In the twentieth year of his age he went to reside at Athens, but attracted by the fame of Anaximenes, he left Athens to attend his school. After making himself acquainted with the doctrines of the Ionic school, as taught by Anaximenes, he returned to Athens, and taught philosophy in private. Among his pupils were some of the most celebrated men of his time; Pericles, Euripides and Socrates, were by him instructed in the philosophy of the Ionic school. He supposed the sun was inflammable matter, and that the moon was inhabited. He believed the material world to have originated from a confused mass, consisting of different kinds of particles, and that the peculiar form and properties of each body, depend upon the nature of that class of particles, of which it is chiefly composed.

With Anaxagoras, great nature's law
Is similarity; and every compound form

Consists of parts minute, each like the whole;
And bone is made of bone, and flesh of flesh;
And blood, and fire and earth, and massy gold,
Are, in their smallest portions, still the same.

The similar particles of matter, which he supposed to be the basis of nature, being without life or motion, induced the conclusion, that there must have been from all eternity, a supreme and intelligent mind, which gave motion, life and being to the whole. He, therefore, maintained, according to Plato and others, that there was an infinite and disposing mind, the cause of all things. Because he taught, that the sun was an inanimate fiery substance, and, therefore, not a proper object of worship, Anaxagoras was charged with impiety and sentenced to death, which sentence, Pericles with much difficulty got changed to fine and banishment.

The successors of Anaxagoras were *Diogenes Apollionates*, a disciple of Anaximenes, and *Archelaus* of Miletus. The former taught that *air* is the first principle in nature, but that it partakes of a divine intelligence, a doctrine similar to that of Anaximenes. The latter taught, that heat is the cause of motion and cold of rest; that the earth, at the beginning, was a muddy mass, whence living animals were produced and nourished, and that animals have souls which differ in their powers, according to the structure of the bodies in which they reside. Archelaus is considered the last preceptor of the Ionic school.

The *Socratic sect* was founded by Socrates, to whom has been assigned, if not the first, at least a very distinguished place among ancient philosophers. His father, *Sophroniscus*, was a statuary; for some time Socrates followed the occupation of his father, but was at length seduced from the workshop to the school of philosophy, and under the instructions of Anaxagoras and Archelaus, he laid the foundation of his fame. Whilst other philosophers of his time were occupied in refined speculations on the nature and origin of things, he conceived the true end of philosophy to be, to free mankind from the dominion of pernicious prejudices; to correct their vices; to inspire them with a love of virtue, and thus conduct them in the path of true piety. He taught that the Supreme Being is seen in his works, which demonstrate, to the most superficial, his existence and benevolent Providence. Besides the Supreme Being, he admitted the ex-

istence of beings who possess a middle station between God and man, whom he supposed to be concerned in the management of human affairs. He believed that the human soul is a divine principle, which, when it passes out of the body, returns to heaven, and that the existence of good men will be continued after death, in a state in which they will receive the reward of their virtues. The whole system taught by this philosopher, inculcated a sublime morality, worthy a distinguished place by the side of the most approved systems of modern times, and endeavored to impress upon the mind that true felicity is not to be derived from external possessions, but from wisdom, which consists in the knowledge and practice of virtue.

Socrates had no settled or established place where he taught the principles of his philosophy. It was his custom in the morning to visit the different public places of exercise; at noon the market places, and to spend the rest of the day in those parts of the city most frequented. These occasions he made use of for the purpose of communicating lessons of wisdom. Sometimes he collected an audience in the Lyceum, a grove on the banks of the Illyssus, and delivered a discourse. His usual method of instruction, however, was to propose a series of questions to the person with whom he conversed, and having first gained his assent to some obvious truths, he obliged him to admit others, because of their resemblance to those to which he had already assented. He never assumed the air of a morose and rigid preceptor, but communicated instruction with the ease and pleasantry of polite conversation. By this easy and familiar mode of conveying information, he gained many disciples, and his doctrines became extremely popular.

Xenophon, the celebrated historian, was one of the favorite disciples of Socrates, and while he was an ornament of the Socratic school he strictly adhered to the tenets of his master. *Æschines* was an obscure Athenian, who, although oppressed by poverty, devoted himself to the pursuit of wisdom and became highly respectable and distinguished. He wrote seven dialogues in the spirit of his school, on temperance and other virtues. *Simon*, another disciple of Socrates, was originally a leather dresser in Athens, but acquired distinction for his adherence to the Socratic system of philosophy, and the zeal and talent with which he endeavored to unfold its principles. The last of the

immediate disciples of Socrates we will mention, was *Cebes*, by birth a Theban, who was the author of an allegory entitled "A picture of human life," which is still extant. From this school arose many philosophers, who became the founders of other sects, entertaining opinions widely different from each other, and from the school from which they sprung.

The *Cyrenaic sect*, was founded by *Aristippus*, and was so called from the city of Cyrene, in Africa, the birthplace of the founder. While *Aristippus* was attending Olympic games, he heard of the wisdom of Socrates, which inspired him with the desire of becoming one of his disciples, and having been admitted, he soon became one of the most prominent members of the school. A certain freedom of manners, however, which he had long indulged, was not entirely subdued by the austerity of Socratic discipline, and in consequence thereof, having become displeasing to the sect, he withdrew from Athens and established a school of his own. He passed some time at the court of Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, where, from a certain versatility of disposition, he accommodated himself to the manners of the court, and ridiculed the severe discipline and gravity of demeanor of other philosophers, among whom was Plato, then also resident at the court of Dionysius. With that accommodating spirit for which he seems to have been distinguished, he departed from the rigid morality of his master, and established a much more indulgent system, which soon had many followers, but which was of but short duration. After his death his doctrines were taught by his daughter *Arete*. The most eminent of his disciples was *Hegesias*, who wrote a book to prove that death, as the cure of all evil, is the greatest good—a doctrine, which so far regards the cure of an evil, may, without a scruple, be admitted, but mankind are too much attached to this life, and too much addicted to its enjoyments, to admit that it is the greatest good.

The *Megaric* or *Eristic sect*, was founded by *Euclid* of Megara; it was called Megaric, from the birthplace of its founder, and *Eristic*, from its disputatious character. *Euclid* was endowed by nature with a quick and penetrating genius, and early applied himself to the study of philosophy. He removed from Megara to Athens, to attend the lessons of Socrates, but evincing a strong propensity for disputation, which Socrates disliked, a separa-

tion took place, and in a short time he became the head of a school at Megara, in which his chief employment was, to teach the art of disputation. The moral doctrines taught by Euclid, differed but slightly from those of Socrates. He taught that there is one supreme good, which he called by the different names of Intelligence, Providence, God; and that evil considered as an opposite principle to the sovereign good, has no physical existence. *Euclid* was immediately succeeded in the school of Megara, by *Eubulides*, a strenuous and violent opposer of Aristotle. The most distinguished disciple of this sect, was *Stilpo* of Megara, who successfully applied the moral precepts of philosophy to the correction of his natural propensities. So famous did he become, that when he visited Athens, the people ran out of their houses to see him, and the most eminent philosophers attended his discourses. After the death of Stilpo, this sect fell into disrepute.

The *Eliac sect* was founded by *Phædo* of Ellis, who adhered so closely to the doctrines of the Socratic school, that the difference is scarcely to be perceived. On his death the school was continued by *Menedemus* of Eretria, from whom it also had the name of the *Eretraic* school, on its being removed from Ellis to Eretria. *Menedemus* studied philosophy under Plato, and it is related of him, that he was so poor, that in order to enable him to pursue his studies, he went among the criminals in the public prisons every night and ground corn, by which means he was able to spend the day in attendance upon the schools. He possessed great versatility of genius, and a comprehensive mind; he declared his opinions with freedom, inveighed against the vices of others, and by the purity of his own manners commanded universal respect. After his death, the *Eliac* or *Eretraic sect*, losing its main support, did not long exist as a separate school, its disciples embracing the doctrines of one or the other schools then in existence.

The *Academic sect* was founded by *Plato*, the most illustrious and distinguished of the disciples of Socrates, under whose instructions he placed himself at twenty years of age, and continued eight years. He was born in the island of Ægina, about 430 years before Christ, and is said to have been descended on his father's side from Codrus, and on his mother's from Solon. He possessed a versatility of talent, which first induced him to turn

his attention to poetry, and particularly dramatic poetry. He is said to have been the author of about forty comedies, a few fragments of which only remain. Happening to hear a discourse from Socrates, he forsook the muses and applied himself to the study of philosophy. In the pursuit of knowledge he visited *Magna Græcia*, where he was instructed in the mysteries of the Pythagorean school, and afterwards travelled into Egypt, where he was initiated into the mysterious learning of the priesthood. Returning thence he settled in Athens, and opened his school in a public grove, called the Academy, adorned with statues and temples and planted with lofty trees. This new school soon became celebrated, and attracted disciples from various quarters. Plato was more attached to speculative, than useful science, and some of his speculations and opinions, appear not only extravagant, but absurd, according to our present views, when the light of reason is assisted by the superior light of revelation. But when we remember, that Plato and the other philosophers of his day, were directed in their researches solely by a vigorous understanding, and were compelled to combat the corruptions of a long established system of idolatry, we cannot but admire the grandeur and sublimity of their conceptions, and the general justness of the doctrines they taught. Plato taught, that man's highest good consists in the contemplation and knowledge of the first good, which is mind or God—that the only power in human nature, which can acquire a resemblance to the supreme God, is reason—that the soul of man is immortal, and after death will be admitted to a participation of the blessings prepared for the virtuous—that the great end of knowledge is to render man as like to God, as the condition of human nature will permit, and that the body is a prison from which the soul must be released, before it can arrive at a knowledge of those things which are real and immutable. He maintained the existence of two beings, one self-existent and the other created; that the world was created by the self-existent cause, from the rude and indigested mass of matter, which had existed from all eternity, and which had even been animated by an irregular principle of motion. From these materials were formed the four elements, and the heavens and the earth; and, into the active principle of matter, the divinity infused a rational soul—the souls of men were formed from the remainder of the rational soul of the

world, which had previously given existence to the invisible gods and demons. He divided the passions into two classes; the irascible, seated in the breast, and the sensual, seated in the belly and inferior parts of the body. This division induced the fanciful comparison of the soul to a small republic, of which the reasoning and judging powers were stationed in the head, as in a citadel, and of which the senses were the guards and servants. This distinguished philosopher was the first in the heathen world, who supported the immortality of the soul by arguments, deduced from truth and experience. He contended that death could not destroy the soul, which was of divine origin, and of an uncorrupted and immutable essence, and which, though inherent for a while in matter, could not lose that power which was an emanation of God. The works of Plato are divided into physical, logical, ethical and political, and are, with the exception of a few letters, written in the form of dialogues. He lived to the advanced age of eighty-one years, and died about 349 years before the birth of Christ. Statues and altars were erected to his memory, and the day of his birth long continued to be celebrated by his followers as a festival.

Soon after the death of Plato, the Academic sect, having lost its chief pillar, was split into the *old*, the *middle* and the *new* academy. The old consisted of the followers of Plato, who taught the doctrines of their master without mixture or corruption; among whom were *Speusippus*, *Xenocrates*, *Polemo* and *Crantor*. Speusippus was a nephew of Plato, and filled the chair of the Platonic school during eight years, when being rendered incapable of attending to its duties, in consequence of a paralytic stroke, he resigned in favor of Xenocrates, who first studied under Æschines, but afterwards became a disciple of Plato. He was of a gloomy and severe temper, which was, in a good measure, corrected by the instructions of his master. He was celebrated not only for his wisdom, but his virtues, and such perfect reliance had the Athenians on his integrity, that when called upon to give evidence in a certain case, his word was deemed sufficient, and Philip of Macedon said, that of all those who came to him on embassies from foreign states, Xenocrates was the only one he had not been able to purchase. He died in the eighty-second year of his age, about 316 years before Christ. *Polemo*, in his youth, was ad-

dicted to a licentious course of life, but was happily turned from his dissipated and irregular habits by the arguments of Xenocrates. So ardently did he afterwards pursue the study of philosophy and the path of virtue, that he was judged worthy to fill the chair of the Academy on the death of Xenocrates. *Crantor* was celebrated for the purity of his moral doctrines; Cicero calls his discourse "On Grief," a small, but golden piece, adapted to heal the wounds of the mind, not by encouraging stoical insensibility, but by suggesting arguments drawn from the purest fountains of philosophy.

The *middle academy* consisted of those who receded from the Platonic school, without entirely deserting it, and was founded by *Arcesilaus*, a native of Æolis. He was early instructed in mathematical science and polite literature, but becoming enamoured of the study of philosophy, he first attended the lectures of Theophrastus, then those of Polemo, and at length founded the middle academy, in which he adhered, mainly, to the doctrines of Plato. The doctrines taught by Arcesilaus, and which appear to differ from those of Plato, were, that although there is a real certainty in the nature of things, every thing is uncertain to the human understanding, and consequently, that all confident assertions are unreasonable. He thought it disgraceful to assent to any proposition, the truth of which is not fully established, and maintained, that in all questions opposite opinions may be supported by arguments of equal weight. He disputed against the testimony of the senses, and the authority of reason; but at the same time acknowledged, that they are capable of furnishing probable opinions sufficient for the conduct of life. *Arcesilaus* himself seems to have been a singular compound of virtue and vice. He united many moral qualities which procured him esteem, but he was at the same time fond of splendid entertainments and luxurious living, and died at the age of seventy-five, from excessive drinking.

The *new academy* was founded by *Carneades*, a native of Cyrene, in Africa, who is represented as one of the most illustrious ornaments of the academy, and who received the first knowledge in the art of reasoning from Diogenes, the Stoic. It was the doctrine of the new academy that the senses, the understanding and the imagination frequently deceive us, and therefore cannot be infallible judges of truth; but, that, from the impressions

which we perceive to be produced on the mind, by means of the senses, we infer appearances of truth, or probabilities. These impressions were called phantasies or images, which, it was maintained, did not always correspond to the real nature of things, and that there is no infallible method of determining when they are true or false, and consequently, that they afford no certain criteria of truth. As the foundation of morals, Carneades taught, that the ultimate end of life is the enjoyment of those things towards which we are directed by the principles of nature. Carneades was succeeded by *Clitomachus*, a native of Carthage. He is said to have written four hundred books on subjects of philosophy. He was preceptor in the academy from the death of Carneades until about 100 years before Christ, a period of thirty years. *Antiochus* of Ascalon, was the last preceptor of the Platonic school in Greece. He resigned the chair about eighty years before the birth of Christ.

The *Peripatetic sect* was founded by *Aristotle*, a philosopher of extensive and penetrating genius and various talent, fitted to shine in any department of human knowledge. He was a native of Stagyra, a town of Thrace, and was hence called the *Stagyrite*. At the age of seventeen he entered the school of Plato, under whose instructions he continued twenty years, at the expiration of which time he established a school of his own. He held his master Plato in great veneration, and on his death he erected a monument to his memory, with the following inscription:

> To Plato's sacred name this tomb is rear'd;
> A name by Aristotle long rever'd!
> Far hence, ye vulgar herd! nor dare to stain
> With impious prayer this ever hallow'd fane.

Plato held Aristotle in equal esteem, and so highly did he prize his vigorous intellect, that he called him the *mind of his school*. Aristotle opened his school in the Lyceum, a grove in the suburbs of Athens, where he held conversations on the subjects of philosophy, walking as he discoursed; whence his followers were called Peripatetics. The doctrines taught by Aristotle were divided into two classes, namely, the *Exoteric*, comprehending such subjects as he judged proper for the public ear, such as logic, rhetoric and other sciences of a general ap-

plication to the common affairs of men; and the *Esoteric*, which treated of the more abstruse doctrines concerning existence, nature and the Divinity, and which were too exalted for the great mass of his countrymen, corrupted as they were by the influence of the idolatrous worship which surrounded them. The *Esoteric* doctrines he delivered in the morning, to select disciples, whom he required to have been previously instructed in the elements of learning, and to have given evidence of posessing minds capable of receiving and comprehending the more sublime truths of philosophy. The *Exoteric* doctrines he delivered in the evening, to a promiscuous auditory. The former he called his morning, the latter his evening walk.

The works of Aristotle were voluminous, and treated of a variety of subjects, logical, physical, metaphysical and ethical; and his inquiries into the arcana of nature, in the various departments of animal, vegetable and mineral, greatly exceeded the investigations of preceding philosophers—there was scarcely a subject then known but exercised his pen. Most of his writings, particularly those on subjects which he communicated to his select disciples, are extremely difficult to comprehend, owing to the concise and obscure manner in which he treats them, affording a striking example of the truth of the maxim,

"———— I strive to be concise,
I prove obscure ————"

The philosophy of Aristotle was divided into three branches, *Instrumental*, *Theoretical* and *Practical*. Under the first are included his doctrines concerning logic and rhetoric; under the second, physics, pneumatology, ontology and mathematics; under the third, ethics and policy.

As the founder of a new sect, he would, of course, differ in many essential particulars from his teachers. With regard to the formation of the world, he believed there were in nature opposite principles, independent and underived, from which all things proceed. These principles he denominated, *Form*, *Privation* and *Matter*; the two former contrary to each other, the latter the common subject of both. *Matter* and *form* he considered the constituent principles of things—*privation* making no part of their constitution, but accidentally associated with them. Primary matter, eternal and uncreated, he considered destitute

of all qualities, and therefore not body, but the subject on which it might be impressed. The causes or principles of the universe he divided into *material*, of which things are made; *formal*, by which every thing was made to exist as it is; *efficient*, by the agency of which any thing is produced; and *final*, or the end for which any thing is produced. During the dark ages of Christianity as well as of literature, the philosophy of Aristotle was held in great veneration by the most influential of the Christian fathers, who adopted and incorporated many of his opinions with the doctrines of the scriptures.

Aristotle continued his school in the Lyceum twelve years, when becoming apprehensive, from the versatile character of the Athenians, of meeting the fate of Socrates, he retired to Chalcis, where he died about 320 years before Christ, in the sixty-third year of his age. Previously to his removal from Athens, at the request of his disciples, he nominated as his successor in the chair of the Lyceum, his favorite disciple *Theophrastus*, who, although he deviated in some particulars from the doctrines of his master, well sustained the reputation of the school.

Theophrastus was a native of Eresuim, a town of Lesbos, and was born three hundred and ninety years before Christ. He received the rudiments of learning in his own country, but was afterwards sent to Athens, where he was first a disciple of Plato and afterwards of Aristotle. When he succeeded to the chair of Aristotle, he conducted the school with so much reputation, that he had about two thousand scholars, and became so great a favorite with the Athenians, that when one of his enemies accused him of impiety, the accuser himself with difficulty escaped the punishment he endeavored to bring on Theophrastus. As a writer he was voluminous, having composed upwards of two hundred books on various subjects. Some of his works are still extant, among which are treatises in several departments of natural history, to which he seems to have turned his attention particularly, and his "Characters," an excellent treatise on morals, exhibiting the moral philosophy of the Peripatetic school. Theophrastus, according to some, died in the 85th, according to others, in the 107th year of his age. He is supposed to have written his "Characters" when upwards of ninety.

Theophrastus was succeeded by *Strato* of Lampsacus, who filled the chair with great reputation for eighteen years. In

some of his doctrines he departed from those of Aristotle. He taught that the world has neither been formed by the agency of a Deity, distinct from matter, nor by an intelligent animating principle, but has arisen from a force innate to matter, originally excited by accident, and since continuing to act, according to the peculiar qualities of natural bodies. He also taught that the seat of the soul is in the middle of the brain, and that it only acts by means of the senses. After the death of *Strato*, the school of Aristotle continued to be supported by many distinguished men, until the fall of Grecian liberty.

The *Cynic sect* was founded by *Antisthenes*, who, because of the severe censures he passed upon the manners of the age, was surnamed the *Dog*. He was an Athenian by birth, and in his youth acquired some fame for his valor in the battle of Tanagra. Attracted by the wisdom of Socrates, he became one of his disciples, and was so diligent and persevering in the pursuit of wisdom, that he visited Athens every day, although he resided about five miles distant. Inimical to every thing like luxury in diet and dress, when he opened his school, in order to exhibit an example of the doctrines he taught, he wore no other garment than a coarse cloth, and suffered his beard to grow, while his diet was of the coarsest kind. In these particulars he was closely followed, if not exceeded, by some of his disciples. The peculiarities of this sect were, a contempt for effeminate vices, and a rigorous adherence to the rules of moral discipline. Its great objects were, to subdue the passions and produce simplicity of manners among all ranks of people. The *Cynics* were, for some time, regarded as

"The stern defenders of pure virtue's cause,"

and commanded attention and respect from the austerity of their morals; but at length regarding themselves as the exclusive censors of the public morals, their censures degenerated into low and vulgar scurrility, and the whole sect fell into deserved contempt. One of the most celebrated philosophers of this sect was *Diogenes*, well known for his affectation in selecting a tub as the place of his residence, and over whose tomb was erected a column of Parian marble, terminated by a figure of a dog, a fit emblem of his churlish humor. Diogenes was born at Sinope, a city of Pontus. His father being obliged to leave his country,

visited Athens, where Diogenes became the pupil of Antisthenes, and embracing with zeal all his doctrines, soon become the intimate friend and companion of his master. He determined to become distinguished; he, therefore, wore a coarse cloak, carried a wallet and staff; made the porticos and other public places his habitation, and depended upon charity for his daily bread. Diogenes possessed a penetrating genius, and was well acquainted with mankind. His natural talents, and his acquired information, fitted him to shine in society, and he might have become useful to his fellows in his day and generation; but his usefulness was destroyed by his eccentricity of character, and instead of commanding respect and esteem, he was generally regarded, as he deserved to be, with contempt. The Cynic sect had many followers, among others *Hipparchia*, the wife of Crates, a Theban philosopher of the same school. She had adopted all the peculiarities of the founder, and was a zealous advocate of his doctrines.

The *Stoic sect* was a branch of the Cynic, and was founded by *Zeno*, a native of the island of Cyprus. Zeno first received his instructions from *Crates*, the Cynic, and afterwards from other philosophers, and having thus stored his mind with the doctrines and tenets of different sects, he set about forming a system of his own. He at length founded a new school, which he held in a public portico called Στοα, the porch, hence his followers were called Stoics, or philosophers of the porch. Zeno soon obtained numerous followers, and on account of his integrity was held in such high estimation by the Athenians, as to be entrusted with the keys of the citadel. In his person Zeno was tall and slender, of severe and unbending aspect. In his mode of living he was remarkably abstemious, being satisfied with the most frugal meals. In his dress he was plain, but neat, therein exhibiting a striking contrast to the mode of dress adopted by the Cynics. He lived to the great age of ninety-eight, and then voluntarily put an end to his life. As he was walking out of his school he fell and broke one of his fingers, upon which, striking the earth, he exclaimed, "Why am I thus importuned? I obey thy summons," and immediately went home and strangled himself.

The Stoic system of philosophy, although it possessed some doctrines peculiar to itself, was a mixture of the doctrines of Pythagoras, and those of different sects of the Ionic school, with

all of which he was familiar. The absurdities and extravagancies which are to be discovered in the doctrines of Zeno, are to be attributed to his endeavors to amalgamate the opposite and conflicting doctrines, on which his system was principally founded, and also to the frequent and vehement contests between him and the disciples of the academy, and between him and Epicurus. In those controversies, Zeno and his disciples were induced to extend their arguments and defence of their own system, to their utmost limit, and as is usual on such occasions, they were frequently inconsistent with themselves. Notwithstanding, however, the absurdities and extravagancies alluded to, the philosophy of Zeno was, perhaps, as much to be approved and admired, as that of the most celebrated of the ancient philosophers.

Zeno taught, that there existed from eternity a dark and confused chaos, in which was contained the first principles of all future beings,—that this chaos being at length arranged, became the world as it now exists—that the universe, though one whole, contains two principles, distinct from the elements—one passive, the other active; the passive principle is pure matter without qualities, the active principle is reason, or God—that the active principle or God, is pure ether, or fire, inhabiting the exterior surface of the heavens, where every thing divine is placed—that this active principle is underived, incorruptible and eternal; possessed of intelligence, good and perfect; the efficient cause of all the peculiar qualities, or forms of things, and the constant preserver and governor of the world:

"One source of life, one animating soul
That dwells in all, and forms and guides the whole."

With regard to the structure of the universe, he taught that the world is spherical in its form, and surrounded by an infinite vacuum; that the sun is a sphere larger than the earth, consisting of fire of the purest kind—that it is an animated being, and the first of derived divinities—that the stars are fiery bodies, possessed of perception and intelligence, and that they are nourished by exhalations from seas and rivers,—that being possessed of intelligence, they are

———— versed in the will of fate
And unfold what good and ill on mortals wait;"

a doctrine held by the Chaldean and Egyptian astrologers. He also maintained that the moon is spherical, and occupies the lowest part of the etherial regions—that the earth is the most dense part of the world, and is the main support of nature, and that it is the centre of the world and unmoveable.

If Zeno himself did not teach, some of his most distinguished disciples believed, that man is one whole, composed of body and mind. That mind is a spark of the divine fire, which is the soul of the world. That eternal reason, by which all nature is animated, and which, by its productive power, communicates essential qualities to every thing that exists, impressed the forms, qualities and powers of man, upon certain portions of matter. The soul of man, being a portion of the Deity, is then of the same nature; a subtle, fiery substance, endued with intelligence and reason. They believed the soul to consist of eight parts; the five senses, the productive faculty, the power of speech and the ruling part or reason. Some of the philosophers of this school, believed in the existence of the soul after death, and supposed it to be removed into the celestial regions, there to remain until at the general conflagration, all souls, both human and divine, will be lost in the Deity; others suppose that it was necessary before the soul could be admitted among the divinities, that it should be purged of its inherent vices and imperfections, by a temporary residence in the ærial region between the earth and moon, or in the moon itself—a doctrine not very different from the catholic doctrine of purgatory. The opinion of the later Stoics, with regard to a future state of existence, is evidently derived from the doctrines of Christ; thus Seneca, in his letter to Marcia, on the death of her son, says, "The sacred assembly of the Scipios and Catos, who have despised life, and obtained freedom by death, shall welcome the youth to the region of happy souls. Your father himself shall embrace his grandson, and shall direct his eyes, now furnished with new light, along the course of the neighboring stars, with delight, explaining to him the mysteries of nature, not from conjecture, but from certain knowledge. Like a welcome guide in an unknown city, he will unfold to the inquiring stranger the causes of the celestial appearances."

The Stoic sect continued in Greece, until about fifty-two years before Christ, and had many disciples and followers, du-

ring the flourishing period of the Roman empire. The immediate followers of Zeno in Greece, were *Persæus*, *Aristo*, *Herillus* and *Cleanthes;* the most celebrated of whom was Cleanthes, a native of Assus in Lydia, who first appeared at Athens as a wrestler, but catching the general spirit of philosophising which then pervaded all ranks, he first became the disciple of Crates, the academic, but afterwards embraced the doctrines of Zeno, and became one of his most zealous advocates.

Cleanthes was succeeded by *Crysippus*, a native of Solis, in Cilicia, who was celebrated for his adherence to the doctrines of Zeno. He is said to have written about seven hundred books, on the various subjects connected with philosophy. He died about 208 years before Christ, in the eighty-third year of his age. *Posidonius*, a native of Apamea, in Sicily, taught with great reputation at Rhodes, and visited Rome about 52 years before Christ. Among those who attended his lectures, in the latter city, was the renowned Cicero.*

CHAPTER VI.

Literature of the Greeks. Greek philosophers of the Italic, or Pythagorean school. Pythagoras. Eleatic sect. Heraclitean sect. Epicurean sect. Sceptic sect.

The *Italic* or *Pythagorean school*, was founded by *Pythagoras*. It was first instituted in that part of Italy called *Magna Græcia*, and hence took the appellation of the Italic school. The history of the celebrated founder of this school of philosophy is enveloped in mystery; a mystery which he himself, in order the more effectually to impose upon his disciples, endeavored to maintain in his explanations of the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. It is uncertain where he was born; the common opinion, however, is, that he was born in the island of Samos,

* Potter's Arch. Græc.; Enfield's Hist. of Philos.; Edin. Ency.; Lemp. Class. Dic.; Rees's Cycl.; Plut. Lives; Seneca. Ep.; Cic. Tus. Cic. de ora. La Harpe, Cours de Lit.; Gillie's Arist.; Xen. Memo. of Socrates.; Oeuvres de la Bruyére; Discours sur. Theo.; Travels of Anacharsis.

about 580 years before Christ. Early impressed with the desire of distinction in the various departments of learning, he departed for Egypt, then the seat of learning and philosophy. He soon acquired the confidence of the priests, and was by them initiated into a knowledge of all their mysteries and learning. On his return from Egypt, after an absence of more than twenty years, he opened a school at Samos, but the Samians, being too ignorant to profit by his instructions, he retired to *Magna Græcia*, and established his school at Crotona, where he propagated his doctrines with such success, as soon to effect a wonderful reformation in the morals of the people.

The mode of instruction adopted by Pythagoras, was *exoteric* and *esoteric*, or public and private, in which he followed the manner of the Egyptian priests, who successfully practised it, and thus obtained and preserved an extensive influence over the people. The *exoteric* instructions were delivered publicly, and related to subjects of a general nature, but none were admitted to a knowledge of, or a participation in, the *esoterie* doctrines, until after a long and severe probation. This probationary discipline was a most severe system of self denial, intended to subdue every inclination towards luxurious indulgence; nor was any one admitted, until he was assured of the docility of his disposition, and his power of keeping secrets. After such trial as was judged necessary, which extended from two to five years, if the candidate was esteemed worthy of confidence, a full explanation of the secret doctrines was delivered, but was not suffered to be committed to writing. In order to inure his disciples to self denial, a virtue which he regarded of primary importance, he resorted to various expedients; he sometimes caused a table richly furnished, to be spread before them, and when they were impatiently expecting to gratify their appetites, he commanded the whole to be taken away, and dismissed them without refreshment. He suffered them to wear no garments but of the simplest kind, nor would he indulge them in any thing calculated to inflame their passions, cherish voluptuous desires, or produce any thing like effeminacy of character.

The philosophical doctrines of this distinguished philosopher, differed in many important particulars from those of the Ionic school, so far as we are able to judge from such as have been handed down to us. To ascertain with precision, what those

doctrines were, is difficult, because of the uncertain mode in which they were preserved—they were taught in a secret manner and transmitted by oral tradition, and were, therefore, liable to misrepresentation. Pythagoras considered the end of philosophy to be, to free the mind from whatever has a tendency to hinder it from the contemplation of immortal truth, and the knowledge of divine and spiritual objects—to produce this effect, it was necessary to proceed by easy and regular gradations. The first step towards wisdom, he considered the study of mathematics, or the science of numbers and magnitude, which he divided into four parts; two respecting numbers, and two respecting magnitude; the two former treat of arithmetic and music, the latter of geometry and astronomy. These were of course considered as preparatory to a knowledge of more exalted subjects. In these preparatory exercises, arithmetic held the first place, and music the second; he considered music not only as an art to be judged by the ear, but as a science to be reduced to mathematical principles and proportions, and is said to have been the first who discovered the musical chords. Pythagoras cultivated geometry, which he had learned in Egypt, with great success, and reduced it to a regular science. In astronomy he taught that the sun is the centre of the universe, and that all the planets move around it in eliptical orbits, an opinion considered chimerical and improbable until the 16th century of the Christian era, when it was revived and demonstrated to be true by Copernicus, a native of Poland.

With regard to God, he taught that God is the universal mind, diffused through all things, invisible and incorruptible—that subordinate to the Deity there are three orders of intelligence, gods, demons and heroes, each entitled to the homage and adoration of man—that the air is full of spirits, who cause sickness or health to man or beast, by means of dreams—that the soul of man is a self-moving principle, compounded of two parts, the rational, seated in the brain, and the irrational, which includes the passions, and is seated in the heart—that the sensitive soul perishes, but the rational soul is immortal, because the source from whence it is derived is immortal—that after the rational soul is freed from the chains of the body, it assumes an etherial vehicle and passes into the regions of the dead, where it remains until it is sent back to this world, to inhabit some other body.

Thus it appears that he taught the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and hence forbade his disciples to eat the flesh of animals, or offer animal sacrifices, in their religious ceremonies.

What then is death, but ancient matter drest
In some new figure, and a varied vest?
Thus all things are but altered, nothing dies;
And here and there the unbodied spirit flies,
By time, or force, or sickness dispossess'd,
And lodges where it lights, in men or beast;
Or hunts without, till ready limbs it find,
And actuates these according to their kind;
From tenement to tenement is tost,
The soul is still the same, the figure lost;
And as the soften'd wax new seals receives,
This face assumes, and that impression leaves;
Now call'd by one, now by another name,
The form is only chang'd, the wax is still the same;
So death, thus call'd, can but the form deface,
The immortal soul flies out in empty space,
To seek her fortune in some other place.

Dryden Tran. Ovid, Metd. XV. 158.

A certain celebrated society of the present day, whose powerful influence is felt in every quarter of the civilized world—which lays claim to a high antiquity, and whose peculiar doctrines are delivered after the esoteric manner of Pythagoras, rank him in the number of their fraternity. It has adopted as one of the mysterious symbols of the order, that geometrical problem, on the discovery of which he is said to have sacrificed a hecatomb.*

Empedocles was a distinguished philosopher of this school; he was born at Agrigentum, in Sicily, and flourished about 450 years before Christ. With the character of a philosopher, he united that of a poet and historian, and his poems were publicly recited at the Olympic games, and shared with Homer and Hesiod the applause of the multitude. In his general system of philosophy he differed but little from his master. He was a firm believer in the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul, which he ingeniously and warmly supported in a poem "On Nature." He believed the soul to consist of two parts, namely, the sensitive, produced from the first principle with the elements; and the ra-

* This sacrifice of a hecatomb or one hundred oxen, does not agree with the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and which prohibited the shedding of blood.

tional, a demon, sprung from the divine soul of the world, and sent down into the body as a punishment for its crimes in a former state, to remain there till it is sufficiently purified to return to God. He entertained the singular opinion that in this transmigration of the soul, it may inhabit not only different human bodies, but the body of any animal or plant. *Lucretius*, a philosopher of a different sect, in his poem "On the nature of things," thus speaks of Empedocles:

"———————— in honest fame,
First of his sect; whom Agrigentum bore
In cloud-capt Sicily ————————
Here vast Charybdis raves; here Ætna rears
His infant thunders, his dread jaws unlocks
And heaven and earth with fiery ruin threats.
Here many a wonder, many a scene sublime
As on he journeys, checks the traveller's steps;
And shows, at once, a land in harvest rich
And rich in ages of illustrious fame.
But nought so wondrous, so illustrious, nought
So fair, so pure, so lovely, can it boast,
Empedocles, as thou! ————————"

Good's Trans. of Lucr.

The manner of his death is uncertain. Whilst some say that he closed his life in Greece, others assert, that his curiosity led him to a close inspection of the crater of Mount Ætna, when in a state of fiery eruption, and that he perished in the flames.

On the death of Pythagoras, his doctrines were taught for many years by a succession of his disciples, until his school was split into the *Eleatic*, the *Heraclitean*, the *Epicurean* and the *Sceptic* sects.

In his school of Crotona, he was succeeded by *Aristæus*, who was eminent for his knowledge of mathematics. He taught the doctrines of his master thirty-nine years, and was succeeded by *Mnesarchus*, the son of Pythagoras. Pythagorean schools were afterwards established at Heraclea, a town of Sicily, near Agrigentum; at Metapontum, a town of Lucania, in Italy, and at Tarentum, a town of Calabria, near the mouth of the river Galesus, now the Galeso. These schools were conducted by celebrated philosophers, and attained considerable eminence.

Let us now take some notice of the different sects which sprung from the Italic or Pythagorean school.

The *Eleatic* sect, was founded by *Xenophanes*, a native of Co-

lophon, a town of Ionia, and numbered among its disciples, Parmenides, Zeno of Elea, Democritus and Diagoras. Xenophanes early left his native country and settled in Sicily, where he lived some years; he then passed over into *Magna Græcia*, where he became a disciple of the Pythagorean school, and afterwards a distinguished preceptor. With the freedom which characterizes a liberal mind, he ventured to differ from some of the doctrines of Pythagoras and his followers, and introduce opinions of his own, and at length founded a new sect, afterwards called the *Eleatic*, from the town of Elea, the birthplace of Parmenides and Zeno. Some of the doctrines of this school are, that whatever is, always has been from eternity, without deriving its existence from any prior principle—that nature is one and without limit—that the one infinite, eternal and homogeneous universe, is immutable and incapable of change—that God is one incorporeal, eternal being, and, like the universe, spherical in form—that he is of the same nature with the universe; is intelligent and pervades all things, but bears no resemblance to human nature either in body or mind. They also taught, that there are innumerable worlds—that there is in nature no real production, decay or change—that there are four elements, and that the earth is the basis of all things—that the stars arise from vapours, which are extinguished by day and ignited by night—that the sun consists of fiery particles collected by humid exhalations and daily renewed, and that his course is rectilinear—that there are as many suns as there are different climates of the earth, and that the moon is an inhabited world. From some of the doctrines here laid down, it would seem that Xenophanes widely departed from the doctrines of Pythagoras, particularly in that relating to the heavenly bodies. Pythagoras entertained much clearer and more distinct ideas of the formation of the universe, than to suppose that the stars were, like some meteors, produced by exhalations from the earth, and were renewed every night, and that the sun was produced in the same way and daily renewed. It is probable that the doctrines thus attributed to Xenophanes, are the invention of later times, or have originated in the misconceptions of those who have but superficially examined the opinions of his school.

The *Heracliteau sect* was instituted at Ephesus by *Heraclitus*, one of the disciples of Xenophanes. His natural temper is rep-

resented as being splenetic and melancholy, and he shunned all intercourse with the world, devoting himself to retirement and contemplation. He made choice of a mountainous retreat for his place of residence, and lived upon the natural products of the earth. He flourished about 504 years before Christ, and died at sixty years of age. He taught that *fire* is the principal from which all things in nature are produced—that this principle consists in small indivisible parts or atoms, which are simple in their natures and eternal—that there is no such thing in the universe as rest, all the particles composing the fiery principle being perpetually in motion—that the world comprehends the eternal, living or self-moving fire, which was neither made by gods nor men, but always was and will be—that this principle, or soul of the world, is God, the maker of all things. He further taught, that the heavenly bodies are in the form of boats, having the hollow side towards us, and they become luminous when certain fiery exhalations from the earth are collected within them—that the sun is no larger than he appears to the sight, and becomes eclipsed when its convex surface happens to be turned towards the earth—that the moon is of the same form and nature, and its monthly variations are caused by the gradual changes of its position towards the earth, from concave to convex, and the reverse—that all the stars are nourished by exhalations from the earth, and these, as they are more or less splendid and warm, cause the varieties of day and night, of the seasons and of weather.

The moral part of the philosophy of Heraclitus, consisted in the belief, that the end of life is to enjoy happiness—that for this purpose, it is necessary that the body should have repose, and its wants be confined into as narrow limits as possible—that it is of more importance for men to know themselves, than to acquire knowledge—that human life is the death of the soul, as, whilst it continues in the body, it is confined and depressed, and never gains its true freedom and activity, till it returns to the divine nature from which it emanates, and that the first virtue is to be temperate. Heraclitus, it is said, took great pains to conceal his doctrines, unlike other philosophers, whose object was to promulgate theirs, and gain as many disciples as possible. He deposited his writings in the temple of Diana, where they were read by many philosophers, who incorporated a part of his

system with their own—among others Plato is said to have adopted that part of the Heraclitean philosophy, which treated of the nature and motion of matter. Zeno also transferred some of the tenets of Heraclitus to his own system. The Heraclitean sect became extinct soon after the death of Socrates. The celebrated *Hippocrates* belonged to this sect.

The *Epicurean sect* was founded by *Epicurus*, who was born at Gargettus, in the vicinity of Athens, and was hence called the Gargettian, as Aristotle was called the Stagyrite, from the place of his birth. This sect attained to very great distinction, and could number among its disciples some of the most distinguished citizens of Greece and Rome. *Epicurus* first opened his school at Mitylene, in the island of Lesbos, but soon after removed to Athens, where he purchased a small garden, and there taught his system; hence his disciples were called "philosophers of the garden." The moral tendency of the doctrines of Epicurus having been violently assailed by some of his contemporaries, and particularly by Zeno and his disciples, have, as we believe, been much misrepresented—doctrines and opinions in morals have been attributed to him, which he never taught, and we think a fair examination of his principles, as they have been transmitted to us, will show that the charges made against him were prompted by envy of his superior talents and reputation, rather than any just ground of censure. *Epicurus* in his own conduct was exemplary for his temperance, and he inculcated upon his followers, plainness, if not severity of manners, and a strict government of the passions, as the best and surest means of passing a tranquil and happy life. In his diposition Epicurus was lively and cheerful; he loved to be surrounded by persons of similar character, and he possessed a captivating facility of address, that lured many a disciple to his school. He taught his disciples to walk through life tranquilly and innocently—to look on death as its gentle termination, which it became them to meet with ready minds, neither regretting the past, nor anxious for the future. The school of Epicurus soon became exceedingly popular, rivaling that of Zeno, then enjoying great reputation, and disciples came from all parts of Greece to attend his lectures and instructions.

With regard to nature, Epicurus taught that the universe always existed, and will always remain, for there is nothing into

which it can be changed—that it consists of body and space, and is infinite, and, of course, without limits—that all bodies consist of parts of which they are composed, and into which they may be resolved, and these parts are either themselves simple principles, or may be resolved into such—that these first principles or atoms, are divisible by no force, and, therefore, must be immutable—that as these atoms are perpetually in motion, or making an effort to move, they must be moved by an internal impulse called gravity. He further taught, that this world is not eternal, but began at a certain time to exist—that as every thing in the world is liable to the vicissitudes of production and decay, the world itself must be so too. He considered that the world was formed by that infinite number of atoms, which, with infinite space, constituted the universe, falling into the region of the world, were collected into one rude and indigested mass. In this chaos, the heaviest and largest atoms first subsided, whilst the smaller, and those which from their form would move most freely, were driven upwards, and rising into the outer region of the world, formed the heavens; those which were suited to form fiery bodies, collected themselves into stars, and those which could not rise so high, formed themselves into air; from those which subsided, the earth was produced, which is situated in the middle of the system. With regard to the soul of man, he believed it to be a subtle, corporeal substance, composed of the finest atoms; that it is composed of four distinct parts, namely, fire, which causes animal heat; an etherial principle, which is moist vapor; air—and a fourth, called sensation, this latter principle differing from the three former. His chief argument in favor of the materiality of the soul, is, that if it were not corporeal and material, it would neither touch nor be touched, and consequently could neither act nor suffer. He considered the soul as only capable of exercising its faculties of sensation by means of the bodily organs; that thus the body partakes of the sensations of the soul, and upon its separation becomes wholly insensible. The mind, that part of the soul which consists in the power of thinking, judging and determining, he believed to be formed of particles most subtle in their nature, and capable of the most rapid motion—that in whatever part of the body it resides, it exists as a portion of the soul, with

which it is so closely united as to form one nature with it, at the same time retaining its own distinct power of thinking.

In morals he taught, that the end of living is happiness, and that since it is the business and interest of every man to be happy in life, he ought to employ philosophy in the search of it—not that species of philosophy, which, according to the Cynic rule, consisted in austerity of manner and contempt for the refinements and common courtesies of society, but that rational pleasure which refines and improves existence, and leads us in the more flowery paths of wisdom and virtue—for certainly, man can be wise without being austere, virtuous without being morose. Epicurus strongly recommended to his disciples to be prudent, that they might secure their own tranquillity, and temperate, that they might be enabled to enjoy the pleasures of life without its inconveniences. He enjoined upon them, to be moderate in the pursuit of honors and riches, as the only security against disappointment and vexation—to curb their passions in all things, and to be just in all their transactions with their fellow men. By the practice of these virtues, they would, in the bright examples of their lives, disprove the assertions of ther enemies. The doctrine of the Epicureans differed from their rivals, the Stoics, in the following particulars: the latter held God to be the soul of the world, diffused through universal nature—the former held atoms and space to be the first principle of all things; the Stoics conceived the active and passive principle of nature to be connected by the chain of fate; the Epicureans ascribed every appearance in nature to a fortuitous collision and combination of atoms.

The *Sceptic sect* was founded by Pyrrho, a native of Elea. The distinctive character of this sect, was, that its disciples doubted the truth of every system of philosophy adopted by other sects, and held no settled opinion, but that every thing is uncertain; hence it was called the *Sceptic*. Pyrrho, the founder of this sect, first studied philosophy under Bryson, the son of Stilpo, a philosopher of the Megaric sect. He afterwards accompanied the army of Alexander to India, where he embraced some of the doctrines of the Brahmins and Gymnosophists; on his return to Greece he attended the lectures of other philosophers, and at length established his own school, in which he taught that every object of human inquiry is involved in uncertainty. The prin-

cipal supporter of this sect after Pyrrho, was Timon, who was first a disciple of the Megaric sect. This school was almost extinct in the time of Cicero, existing only at Alexandria under Ænesidemus, who wrote a treatise on its principles.

The Grecian philosophy, with the exception of the Stoic school, was chiefly confined to Greece and the neighboring countries, until about the time of the conquests of Alexander the Great, when it was disseminated by the philosophers of his train into other and more distant lands. After the final conquest of Greece, by the Roman arms, her philosophy, literature and elegant arts, no longer meeting encouragement in a "land of the free," was transferred to Rome, and under the patronage of Augustus, contributed to make the city of Romulus as renowned in learning, as she was renowned in arms.*

CHAPTER VII.

Literature of the Greeks. Greek Historians: Cadmus of Miletus, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Philistus, Megasthenes, Polybius, Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Grecian Orators: Georgias, Lysias, Isocrates, Demosthenes, Æschines.

We should but very imperfectly fill the task we have undertaken, were we to close our historical sketch of the literature of Greece, without some notice of her historians and her orators. They not only demand a place in this imperfect sketch, but their peculiar merits entitle them to the regard of all who wish to be considered as possessing any knowledge of the varied and interesting history of times long past—of warriors and statesmen who have played their parts on the grand theatre of life, and have long since slumbered in the dust, leaving to posterity the inheritance of their mighty names. It is to their industry and research, we are mainly indebted for the knowledge we possess, not only of ancient Greece, but of other ancient nations

* Potter's Arch. Græc.; Enfield's Hist. of Phil.; Eden. Ency.; Lempriere's Class. Dic.; Reese's Cycl.; A few days in Athens; Gibbon's Rom. Emp.; Mont. Gran. et Dec.; Adams' Rom. Ant.; Kennet's Rom. Ant.; Plutarch's Lives.

distinguished in the annals of history. Without their light, how imperfect would be our information with regard to the mighty empire founded by Cyrus and overturned by Alexander! and how little would we know of those great events which exalted the Grecian name to the pinnacle of renown, and placed the names of a host of heroes and patriots upon the records of imperishable glory.

The first Grecian historian, of whom we have any account, is *Cadmus* of Miletus, surnamed the *ancient*. He lived about 550 years before the birth of Christ, and wrote an historical account of the cities of Ionia, in four books. After him was another historian of the same name and place, who was the author of a history of Attica, in sixteen books. None of their works are extant. Between this period and the time of Herodotus, are enumerated several other historians, who enjoyed considerable reputation in their day, but whose works are now lost. The most distinguished are *Phenecydes* of Athens, and *Hecateus* of Miletus. The former collected the traditions relative to the ancient history of Greece and some of the neighboring states; the latter travelled into Egypt, and composed an historical work interspersed with interesting geographical details.

The earliest historian, whose works have reached us, is *Herodotus*. His history is the oldest extant, except the historical books of the old testament. Herodotus was born at Halicarnassus, a city of Caria, in Asia Minor, and flourished about 445 years before the Christian era. When Herodotus attained to manhood, in consequence of the tyrannical and oppressive conduct of Lygdamus, prince of Halicarnassus, he removed to the island of Samos, where he studied the Ionic dialect, in which he composed his history. After several years residence at Samos, a favorable opportunity having presented itself, he united with a party of his countrymen and succeeded in expelling Lygdamus from his native city. He remained there but a short time, when contentions having arisen, and factions formed, he again withdrew, and travelled into Egypt, where he collected those materials relative to the Egyptians and other nations, which he has so skilfully wrought into his history. After this great work was finished, he returned to Greece, and recited it at the Olympic games, at which people from all parts of Greece were assembled, and was listened to with universal delight. This his-

tory is divided into nine books, each book distinguished by the name of one of the Muses, and comprises an account of the Lydians, Ionians, Lycians, Egyptians, Persians, Greeks and Macedonians, from about 713 years before Christ, to the year 479 before Christ. Herodotus has obtained the distinguished and flattering title of "Father of History," as well on account of his being the oldest profane historian whose works are extant, containing the history of nations in a regular and methodical manner, as on account of the fidelity of the narrative, although sometimes tinctured with the marvellous. His language is simple, elegant and perspicuous, but in the whole course of his history, he seldom inquires into the causes of the particular events he relates, appearing to be satisfied with the simple narration. He describes things as they were, and events as they occurred, without the prejudices and partialities, so distinguishable in modern historians. Before the time of Herodotus, nearly all the Greek historians confined their histories to the transactions and events of a single country or city, seldom going into other lands; they never attempted to connect a series of events relating to different nations, in which all were concerned, so as to form a regular and connected whole. This plan Herodotus was the first to conceive and execute, and thus placed before his countrymen, in one view, all the political transactions in which they had been immediately, or even remotely interested, for a space of two hundred and forty years. Herodotus is supposed to have died at Thurium, a city of Italy, founded by a colony of Athenians, where it is said his tomb was found, with an inscription declaring that "This earth contains in its bosom, Herodotus, son of Lyxes, a Dorian by birth, but the most illustrious of the Ionian historians."*

Contemporary with Herodotus, but several years younger, was *Thucydides*, celebrated for his history of the Peloponessian war. He was present, with his father, at the Olympic games, when Herodotus recited his history, and was so sensibly affected by the recitation, as to shed tears. This circumstance made so deep an impression, as to have a great effect upon his future literary pursuits, as it determined him to employ his talents in a similar undertaking. Thucydides entered the Athenian army

* Beloe's Herodotus: Lemp. Class. Dic.

during the Peloponessian war, and was appointed to the command of a detachment for the relief Amphipolis, but being unsuccessful in the enterprize, he was deprived of his command, and banished from Athens. During his banishment, which continued twenty years, he employed himself in the composition of the history of the Peloponessian war, which has rendered his name immortal. He spared neither labor nor expense to render it perfectly accurate: for this purpose he visited different states and consulted soldiers and generals who were concerned in the different actions which he describes. This work is written in the Attic, the purest of the Grecian dialects, and was so much admired by Demosthenes, for the purity and elegance of its style, that he not only studied it attentively, but transcribed it eight times. Although a faithful narrator of events, and profound and judicious in his reflections, it is objected to him, and with justice, that he puts into the mouths of his principal characters, too many rhetorical and fictitious speeches, calculated to exhibit the inventive and sprightly genius of the author, without enhancing the reputation of the work for accuracy and fidelity. Another objection will lie as to the arrangement, or the manner in which he carries forward the history of events; he often breaks off in the details of transactions, when he has brought them down to a certain period, and then takes up others which he left unfinished, to carry them forward to the same period, thus rendering it tedious, and the perusal less agreeable than it would otherwise be, had he pursued a different method. His history of the Peloponessian war, is brought down to the twentieth year. *Thucydides* died at Athens, in the eightieth year of his age, 391 years before the birth of Christ.*

Xenophon was born about 450 years before Christ, and was distinguished as an historian, a general and a philosopher, three characters rarely found united, at least in modern times. He was one of the favorite disciples of Socrates, from whom he received those instructions and imbibed those precepts, which were of infinite service to him in after life, in the various scenes through which he was destined to pass. Whilst yet a youth, Socrates met him by accident in a narrow passage, and being struck with his external appearance, put forth his staff across the

* Smith's Thucydides; Cic. de Or.; Quint. Ins.

path, and, stopping him, asked where those things were to be purchased, which are necessary to human life? Xenophon appearing at a loss for a reply, Socrates inquired of him where honest and good men were to be found? Xenophon still hesitating, Socrates said to him, "Follow me and learn." From that time Xenophon became a disciple of Socrates; he was distinguished for his strict adherence to the principles of his teacher, and his integrity, piety and moderation rendered him an ornament of the Socratic school. As a general he is celebrated for the masterly manner in which he conducted the march of a body of ten thousand Greeks, after the battle of Canuxa, through an enemy's country, on their return to Greece. He relates their adventures in his work entitled *Anabasis*. After his return to Greece, he joined the standard of Agesilaus, king of Sparta, and fought against the Thebans in the battle of Cheronea. The Athenians displeased with his conduct, brought a public accusation against him, for this alliance and his previous engagement in the service of Cyrus, and condemned him to exile. The Spartans, mindful of his services, provided him a comfortable retreat at Scilluntes in Elea, where he remained with his family until war broke out between the Spartans and Eleans, when he removed to Corinth, where he died, in the ninetieth year of his age, about 359 years before the birth of Christ.

The writings of Xenophon were numerous. Besides *Anabasis*, above-mentioned, he wrote the *Cyropedia*, containing an account of the life and actions of Cyrus the Great, in which the relation materially differs, in many important particulars, from that of Herodotus. Some critics are of opinion, that this work was written for the purpose of delineating the character of a perfect prince, and not with a view of exhibiting a faithful narration of historical facts. His *Hellenica* is a continuation of the history of the Peloponessian war, which he takes up where Thucydides left off. His *Memorabilia* of Socrates, contains an explanation of the precepts and doctrines of the Socratic school, of which, as we have already seen, he was a distinguished disciple. The language of Xenophon is remarkable for sweetness, variety, perspicuity and elegance. Rich, without a superfluity of figures, and smooth without sameness and tedious uniformity. His sentiments are such as might have been expected from the most faithful and judicious of the disciples of

Socrates." The three abovementioned, occupy the first rank among Grecian historians.

Immediately succeeding Xenophon, were *Philistus*, who killed himself 356 years before Christ, and *Megasthenes*, who flourished about 300 years before Christ. *Philistus* wrote a history of Sicily in twelve books, during a period of banishment from his native country. *Megasthenes* wrote a history of the nations of the east, particularly of India, which was highly valued in his time, and was frequently quoted and referred to by ancient authors, when they had occasion to speak of that distant, and almost unknown land. The works of these historians have perished. About this period also lived *Ctesias* of Cnydus, who was physician of Artaxexes and long lived in the capital of Persia, and having had an opportunity of consulting the archives of the empire, he was enabled to correct some of the errors into which Herodotus had fallen.

About 170 years before Christ, flourished *Polybius*, a native of Megapolis, in Peloponessus. *Polybius* was distinguished as a warrior, a statesman and historian. Having been carried as a hostage to Rome, after the dissolution of the Achaian league, he attracted the notice of the great Scipio Africanus, whom he accompanied in his expedition to Africa, and was present at the taking of Carthage; by these means he gained a complete knowledge of the military institutions and discipline of the Romans. On the death of his friend and patron, Polybius returned to the place of his birth, where he died, in the eighty-second year of his age. His history consisted of forty books, five of which only remain, comprehending a period of fifty-three years, from the commencement of the second punic war, to the conquest of Macedon by Paulus Æmelius. Polybius took great pains to inform himself correctly of the events which he describes, and his work is held in high esteem, on account of the fidelity with which it is composed.

Diodorus Siculus was a native of Argyra in Sicily, and flourished about 44 years before Christ. He composed an universal history, on which he was occupied thirty years. He spared neither labor nor expense in the collection of materials, in order that his work might be full and complete. This work was divided into forty books, of which only fifteen are extant; the first five, which bring the history of the world to the Trojan war, and

from the eleventh to the twentieth books, inclusive. Mitford, whose political predelictions are well known, in his "History of Greece," although evidently opposed to Diodorus, probably on account of the warmth with which he supports the cause of liberty, admits, that notwithstanding certain deficiencies in his narrative, he is an honest historian.

About the same time flourished the last of the Grecian historians, *Dionysius*, of Halicarnassus. He left his native country and resided at Rome, where, after twenty years diligent study and research, with a view of making himself acquainted with the antiquities and customs of the Romans, he composed and published his history. This work consisted of twenty books, of which the eleven first are extant, comprising a period of three hundred and twelve years. It is valuable, principally, for the description of the manners, customs and laws of the Romans, as observed by himself, and obtained by a diligent examination of such ancient records as were then at Rome. In addition to his merit as a historian, he is said to have been an eloquent and accomplished orator, a critic and a politician; but with all these qualities, he was superstitious and credulous, and was consequently often led into absurdities and improbabilities.

In the preceding pages we have noticed the principal historians of Greece—men, whose genius and talents, have reflected honor upon the land that gave them birth. We might have mentioned many others, but all that we could have said, would have amounted to scarce any thing more than a mere enumeration of names, so little do we know of their works. A sketch of her orators will conclude all we have to say on the subject of Grecian literature.

The separation of Greece into a number of small and independent states, the popular form of their governments, and the spirit of liberty which pervaded them, afforded a favorable opportunity, and an ample field, for the exercise of the art of oratory, and the display of the powers of eloquence. Hence we find, that oratory attained its highest eminence during the period of Grecian liberty, and declined when her energies were cramped by the weight of a foreign yoke, and the standard of her glory trampled in the dust. In no state of Greece was eloquence cultivated with the same assiduity and success as at Athens, and it was considered of so much importance, that there

arose a set of men called rhetoricians, who professed to explain the principles of the art, and teach a man to be an orator by rule. The influence of eloquence is universally felt, and acknowledged; it may be witnessed in barbarous as well as civilized nations—in the rude assemblies of the Scythians and around the council fire of the American savage, as in the congress of the United States, or the imperial parliament. "The eminent orator," says Tacitus, "is the model which every parent recommends to his children. Even the common people stand at a gaze as he passes by; they pronounce his name with pleasure, and point at him as the object of their admiration. The provinces resound with his praise. The strangers, who arrive from all parts, have heard of his genius; they wish to behold the man, and their curiosity is never at rest, till they have seen his person, and perused his countenance."*

The origin of this art may be assigned to Pitheus, the uncle of Theseus, who opened a school of rhetoric and oratory, fifty years before the Trojan war, or 1200 years before the Christain era, when the warlike chieftains of the age were equally ambitious

"To shine in councils or in camps to dare."

From this time we find no orator worthy of mention until the time of *Georgias*, a native of Leontium, in Sicily, who lived 500 years before Christ, and was the first who professed to prepare his pupils for extemporaneous declamation. He acquired a high reputation, and was admired for his eloquence, as well in Athens, as in his own country. He is, however, represented by Plato in one of his dialogues, as possessing no fit talent for the art he professed to teach.

Lysias was contemporary with Herodotus and Thucydides. He was born at Athens, and in his fifteenth year removed to Thurium, where he continued about thirty years. He was greatly admired by his contemporaries for his oratory, and is said to have written upwards of two hundred and forty orations, of which only thirty-four are extant. Cicero says, that his compositions were so pure and elegant, that you might venture to pronounce him, a perfect orator; and Quintillian says of him, that he is acute and elegant, and if to teach the art of speaking were the only business of an orator, nothing more perfect can

* Tacitus; Dia on Oratory, ch. 8.

be found. He has no redundancy, nothing superfluous, nothing too refined, or foreign to his purpose: his style is flowing, but more like a pure fountain, than a noble river. He died in the 81st year of his age.

Isocrates flourished about 400 years before Christ, and although called an orator, his talents as a public speaker were never displayed, with any striking effect, in the assemblies of the people. His failure as a speaker before a public assembly, was occasioned by his diffidence, which he found it impossible to overcome. He may, therefore, with more propriety be considered as a teacher of eloquence, and a writer of orations delivered by others. Not more than thirty of his orations are extant. It is worthy of remark, and much to the honor of Isocrates, that on the death of Socrates, he alone of all his disciples, had the courage to appear in the streets of Athens in a mourning garb. The orations of Lycias and Isocrates have been clothed in an English dress by Dr. Gillies, the elegant historian of Greece, accompanied by an historical preface, reflecting much light upon the state of oratory at that period. The style of the oratory of Isocrates is admitted to be much inferior to that of Æschines, and far below Demosthenes. Lysias and Isocrates, says Hume, when compared with Demosthenes and Cicero, were eclipsed like a taper when set in the rays of a meridian sun.

We have now arrived at that period of Grecian history, when oratory attained its utmost height, and when the public assemblies resounded with the eloquence of the rival orators, *Æschines* and *Demosthenes*. Æschines was some years older than Demosthenes. At twenty years of age, he entered the Athenian army, and distinguished himself for courage and conduct in several engagements, particularly in that of Mantinea. When peace was restored, he became a clerk to the council of five hundred, and was at one time an actor, and although remarkable for a fine voice and other qualifications for the profession, he quitted the stage for the rostrum; to qualify himself for his new course of life, he attended the school of Plato. He was the rival of Demosthenes, and the most powerful one he ever encountered in the field of eloquence. From honorable rivals for public favor, they became avowed enemies, and in their orations bitterly assailed and denounced each other. This enmity commenced when they were associated together, in an embassy from the

government of Athens to Philip, king of Macedon, on which occasion Æschines permitted his avarice to get the better of his patriotism, and is said to have tarnished his reputation by the acceptance of a bribe from Philip. When the Athenians were about to bestow upon Demosthenes a golden crown, as a reward for his patriotic exertions in the cause of Grecian liberty, it was warmly opposed by Æschines, who was, no doubt, stimulated to the opposition by jealousy of the superior fame of his rival. In consequence of this he was banished to Rhodes, where he opened a school for teaching oratory. Only three of his orations are extant.

Demosthenes was born about three hundred and eighty years before Christ. His father was a sword cutler, and had amassed considerable wealth, which enabled him to give his son all the advantages of education. He gave early indications of those great talents which were afterwards so preeminently displayed in the public assemblies of Athens, in asserting the rights, and supporting the liberties of Greece, and encouraging his countrymen to repel the invasions of Philip. To gain the eminence which he attained as an orator, Demosthenes had to encounter and overcome many difficulties, particularly that of defective utterance, or stammering, which he is said to have conquered by speaking with pebbles in his mouth. The character of Demosthenes, when divested of the glare cast around it by the splendor of his eloquence, does not appear to be entitled to very high commendation; he is represented as an unpleasant companion, a faithless friend, a contemptible soldier, (a rare character in those times,) and mean and sordid in his disposition, often receiving money as a compensation for insult, and for blows inflicted upon him. As an orator, however, he stands preeminent; his orations which have been preserved, are considered as models of eloquence, and all unite in yielding to him the title of "Prince of Orators," a title which it would be considered literary infidelity to dispute. Fenelon, archbishop of Cambray, in his "Dialogues concerning eloquence," expresses himself in the following language, with respect to Demosthenes: "Every oration of Demosthenes is a close chain of reasoning, that represents the generous notions of a soul who disdains any thought that is not great. His discourses gradually increase in force by greater light and new reasons, which are always illustrated by bold

figures and lively images. One cannot but see that he has the good of the republic entirely at heart, and that nature itself speaks in all his transports; for his artful address is so masterly that it never appears. Nothing ever equalled the force and vehemence of his discourses." In another place* the same eloquent writer remarks, that Demosthenes "is above admiration. He uses speech, as a modest man does his clothes, only to cover himself. He thunders; he lightens; he is like a torrent that hurries every thing along with it. We cannot criticise him, for he is master of our passions. We consider the things he says, not his own words. We lose sight of him: we think of Philip alone who usurps every thing. Tully's prodigious art and magnificent eloquence, affect me less than the vehement simplicity of Demosthenes." With regard to the abilities of this great orator, we might present the opinions of numerous authors who have written on the subject of oratory; and although some decree the palm to Cicero, all unite in just commendation of that powerful eloquence, which seizes and captivates the heart.†

In addition to the orators above-mentioned, we might enumerate a Pericles, a Pisistratus and others who were distinguished for their eloquence, but being statesmen and not professed orators, they do not come within our present plan.

While we look back upon the illustrious band of poets, philosophers, historians and orators, who contributed so much to elevate their country in the scale of nations, we cannot but mourn over the melancholy reverse, which has laid her prostrate in the dust. Instead of beholding in the land of Themistocles a nation of independent freemen, we behold a remnant of a generous and high born race compelled to bow before the crescent of the haughty Turk.

> Yet to the remnants of thy splendor past
> Shall pilgrims, pensive, but unwearied, throng;
> Long shall the voyager, with the Ionian blast,
> Hail the bright clime of battle and of song;
> Long shall thine annals and immortal tongue
> Fill with thy fame the youth of many a shore;
> Boast of the aged! lesson of the young!
> Which sages venerate and bards adore,
> As Pallas and the Muse unveil their awful lore.
>
> *Childe Har. Can.* 11. XCI.

* Letter to the French Academy.

† See Fenelon's dialogues concerning eloquence; the Abbé Maury's principles of eloquence; Blair's lectures; Longinus on the sublime; Rollin's belles lettres; Knox essays; Adam's lectures; Hume's essays; Anarcharsis' travels; Cic. de Ora.; Quin. Ins.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the literature of the Romans. Dramatic poets: Andronicus, Ennius, Accius, Nevius, Pacuvius, Plautus, Cecilius, Terence.

Our brief sketch of the literary history of ancient Greece having been brought to a close, we now proceed, according to our plan, with a sketch of that of Rome.

The early history of Rome, like that of other ancient nations, is involved in fable. Those who have investigated this subject with most care, have been disappointed in their anticipated results. With all their skill and industry, they have been unable to remove the veil that conceals the actual circumstances attending the foundation of that mighty city, which, in a few centuries, spread her victorious eagles over the most distant lands, and, from the most obscure and humble beginnings, became the mistress of the world. But where is she now? Where sits the "Queen of cities," that encircled with her protecting walls an immense population? Where her glorious heroes and her mighty legions? Where the monuments of her ancient glory, her triumphal arches and her columns? Alas! we look in vain. Nations, like individuals, have their times of prosperity and their seasons of adversity. A mitred bishop, with his pastoral staff, now holds sway where a Cincinnatus triumphed and an Augustus ruled; an assembly of cardinals occupies the place of the conscript fathers; her mighty legions, in whose train victory followed, have dwindled into a lawless rabble and banditti; her consuls into priests and monks. The monuments of her ancient glory have been destroyed by the ravages of time, or defaced and mutilated by the ruthless hand of Gothic violence; the tombs of her heroes have been violated, and their sacred ashes disturbed to gratify the curiosity of the idle, or the whim of the antiquary.

> Oh Rome! my country! city of the soul!
> The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
> Lone mother of dead empires! and control
> In their shut breasts their petty misery.
> What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
> The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way

O'r steps of broken thrones and temples. Ye!
Whose agonies are evils of a day—
A world is at our feet, as fragile as our clay.

The Niobe of nations! there she stands
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless wo;
An empty urn within her wither'd hands,
Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago;
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;
The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers. ———— ——

Childe Har. C. IV. 78.

According to the generally received opinion, Rome was founded 753 years before the Christian era, by *Romulus* and *Remus*, twin brothers, and sons of *Rhea Sylvia*, daughter of *Numitor*, who was driven from the throne of Alba by *Amulius*, his younger brother. Scarcely were the lines of the new city marked out, when it was proclaimed an asylum for fugitives—"a city of refuge" for the oppressed of all nations, as well as for those whose crimes had driven them from the neighboring towns and cities. All who came were received with open arms, without any inquiry into their characters. On the death of Remus, which happened soon after the foundation of the city, Romulus assumed and exercised the sovereign power, and by his wisdom and policy, established discipline and subordination among a band of needy and rapacious adventurers, and his city soon occupied a conspicuous rank amidst surrounding nations.

Romulus being illiterate himself, and, therefore, ignorant of its advantages, the encouragement of learning and the diffusion of general knowledge formed no part of his political system. His great object was, to establish a firm and efficient government, capable of resisting all encroachments upon his growing power, by his warlike neighbors; to infuse into his subjects that military spirit which was absolutely necessary for the protection of his infant kingdom against their hostile attacks. No other consideration was permitted to interfere with that military discipline, that contempt of danger and death, so carefully inculcated by him, which made every man a soldier, and which was so conspicuously displayed in after times, when a Roman legion would have stood against the world.

This almost exclusive attachment to war and all its "pomp and circumstance," continued for near six hundred years from the

foundation of the city, during which time literature made but little progress—at least none worthy of notice. *Numa*, the immediate successor of Romulus, has been called a philosopher, and "possessed a mind," says Livy, "deeply tinctured with virtue and well furnished with good principles;" and he endeavored, by the introduction of wholesome laws, to soften the manners and tame the turbulent temper of the people, and infuse into them somewhat of his more gentle and philosophic spirit. But whatever portion of general literature he possessed, or whatever may have been the peculiar doctrines of his philosophy, he kept locked within himself, or communicated only to his secluded associate, the nymph *Egeria;* for even the books he had written he ordered to be buried with his body. During the long period abovementioned, literature had made so little progress, that when the Roman ambassadors returned from Athens with a copy of the laws of Solon, and the Decemviri were about to compile the ten tables, they were obliged to procure the assistance of *Hermodorus* of Ephesus, a pupil of Plato, to serve them as an interpreter.

As in all rude nations, poetry appears to have been first cultivated among the Romans, and was employed in celebrating the praise of their gods and their deified heroes. About 400 years after the building of the city, poetry was employed in a species of dramatic entertainment, borrowed from the Tuscans, called the *Fescennine verses*, from Fescennia, a town in Tuscany, where that species of entertainment was first practised. This entertainment was introduced by the Romans at many of their festivals, particularly at harvest home, when they rallied each other in rude and unpolished verse.

> Our ancient swains, of hardy vigorous kind,
> At harvest-home, used to unbend the mind
> With festal sports. ——————
> Here, in alternate verse, with rustic jest
> The clowns their awkward raillery express'd.

A custom similar to this was retained in their *Saturnalia*, or feast of Saturn. This entertainment was gradually improved into what was called *Satyræ*, or *Satires*, which were accompanied with music and dancing. The *Satyræ* are said to have possessed every thing that was agreeable and amusing in the Fescennine

verses without their vulgarity, and were intended to ridicule and expose vice; hence those poems, afterwards written for a similar purpose, were called *satires*.

Livius Andronicus, a freed man of Rome, was the first who ventured to write a regular play, about 241 years before Christ. As was the custom in those days, he acted a part in his own compositions, although the Roman law declared the profession of an actor to be infamous, and deprived those who exercised it, of the rights of citizens. In the representations of his pieces, he was usually assisted by a boy, who sang to the music of the flute. Thus we find, that nearly three hundred years after the drama had attained its utmost height in Greece, under its great masters Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, it was yet in its infancy in Rome. The Roman people, however, were so highly pleased with the improvements introduced by Andronicus, that they abandoned, for a time, their old entertainments of satires, but subsequently caused them to be represented after their comedies or tragedies, in the same manner as farces are exhibited in modern times.

After Andronicus, appeared the comic poet *Ennius*. He was born at Rudii, in Calabria, about 230 years before the Christian era, but was admitted to all the privileges of a Roman citizen. Blessed with a fertile genius and poetic fancy, and possessing also, a taste for the drama, he contributed much to its refinement and improvement, by following in the steps and adopting the manner of the great dramatic writers of Greece. Although his style is, in general, rough and unpolished, Virgil did not scruple to transfer many of his lines and incorporate them with his own works, after having polished them, as the lapidary does the diamond. Ennius, although distinguished in the history of Roman literature, as a dramatic writer, did not confine himself solely to dramatic poetry, but wrote also a kind of history of the Roman Republic, in heroic verse, and hence was called, as appears from Horace's epistle to Augustus, a "second Homer."

> Ennius et sapiens, et fortis, et alter Homerus
> Ut critici dicunt. ———————

> Ennius, the brave, the lofty and the wise,
> Another Homer in the critic's eyes.

None of the works of this writer, now extant, are complete; a few fragments scattered through the works of other ancient authors, have been collected and published in a separate volume. Ennius appears to have been intimate with some of the most distinguished men of his age, among others Cato and Scipio. He died in the 70th year of his age, 169 years before the Christian era.

About the time of Ennius, and a few years subsequent, Rome could boast of the tragic poet *Accius*, and the comic poets *Nevius*, *Pacuvius* and *Plautus*, who at that early period of her literary history, shone as "burning lights," but whose splendor was subsequently eclipsed by the brighter glories of a Terence, a Horace and a Virgil. Notwithstanding they are thus cast into shade, and their fame overshadowed by the reputation of menmore highly gifted in intellectual powers, who enjoyed all the advantages to be derived from a superior state of refinement and greater advances in knowledge, still their names are worthy of commemoration, as the fathers of Roman poetry, and particularly of that called dramatic.

Accius was the first who introduced the tragic muse to a Roman audience. Although much refined and improved by Ennius, the majesty of the drama was still unknown. The loftier passions and prouder feelings of our nature, which give force, dignity and elevation to man, were never represented; comedy and farce occupied the stage and attracted public attention; men were content to witness the representation, and laugh at the follies and vices of the times. Accius, impressed with the idea that the stage might be converted into a source of more refined and rational amusement, and desirous of adding to the dignity of the drama, turned his attention to tragedy, and not only translated some of the most celebrated tragedies of Sophocles, but composed several himself. None of his plays have come down to us entire, but some fragments have been preserved in the works of Cicero. The rhetorician and critic Quintillian, speaks of his style as being rather rough, uncourtly and unpolished, which he attributes rather to the age in which he lived, than to any want of ability to decorate it with the choicest flowers. Accius was held in great honor by the Roman people, on account of the opinion they entertained of his merit as a poet. He died about 180 years before Christ.

Nevius, besides various comedies and other dramatic pieces, wrote a poetical account of the first Punic war, in which he was personally engaged. His dramatic writings were calculated to please the people, but the satirical vein which ran through them, and in which he was fond of indulging, gave such offence to the consul Metellus, as to cause his banishment from Rome. He passed the remainder of his days at Utica, where he died about 203 years before Christ. None of his comedies, nor his poem on the Punic war, are extant; all we possess of his writings, consists of a few fragments, from which but a very imperfect opinion can be formed of his real merit as a poet or a dramatist.

Pacuvius was the son of a sister of Ennius, and was born at Brundusium, a city of Calabria. He united the kindred arts of painting and poetry; he is, however, more indebted for his reputation, to his talents as a poet, than his skill as a painter. He was the author of many dramatic pieces, consisting of tragedies, comedies and satires, which were represented with much eclat on the Roman stage. He possessed a genius that elicited the praise of some of the Roman critics in the Augustan age of critical refinement, although his verse partook of the rough and unpolished character of the times in which he lived. Horace, in his epistle to Augustus, in which he brings to view nearly all the old Roman poets, speaks of him as deserving the character of "learned." Only a few fragments of his works remain. He died at Tarentum in the 90th year of his age.

Plautus deservedly acquired a much higher reputation than any of his predecessors, or contemporaries. He was born at Sarsina, in Umbria, a country of Italy, but early fixed his residence at Rome, where he soon attracted public attention. Having a talent for poetry, the cultivation of it became the object of his ambition, and as the stage was then the field from which the richest harvest was to be reaped, he became a dramatic poet. In his dramatic compositions, he selected for his model the comedies of Epicharmus, of Syracuse, who has already been mentioned as the inventor of comedy, making, however, such alterations in the plan and arrangement, as were suited to the Roman stage, and selecting for his subjects such peculiarities in Roman manners, as he believed ought to be lashed with the whip of satire, and could be introduced with the greatest advantage. Al-

though he acquired a high reputation among his contemporaries, and his writings were admired for purity, eloquence and energy, even in the days of Augustus, he has not been quite so fortunate in modern times—modern critics are unwilling to assign him so conspicuous a niche in the temple of fame. The modern writer most severe upon Plautus, is *Laharpe*, whose opinions as a correct and judicious critic, are entitled to much consideration. He censures his comedies as being defective in their plots, the same characters continually recurring with but slight variation; disgusting in style and dialogue, and mingling with his wit and humor too much low buffoonery. At the same time, however, that he pronounces this severe judgment, he admits that he possessed a strong mind and a fertile genius. As an apology for the style, manner and language of Plautus, which have been so severely reprehended, it ought to be remembered, that the Romans were then just emerging from a rough and unpolished state, and only beginning to assume a politeness of manner, and it would have been impolitic and unwise to have attempted a complete and thorough reformation, in a species of amusement to which they were much attached. Improvements in public taste, as in every thing else, are not the work of a moment; they must be introduced by degrees, and they gradually take effect; thus Plautus introduced such improvements in dramatic poetry, as were enlarged and extended by the superior genius of Terence and other succeeding poets. Plautus was the author of twenty-five comedies, twenty of which, either in whole, or in part, are extant.

Cæcilius was a native of Gaul; he removed to Rome, where he fixed his residence, as the capital of the empire afforded a better field for the display of his peculiar genius, than the wild regions of his native land. He commenced his career as a candidate for public favor, by writing for the stage. He produced many comedies and other dramatic pieces, none of which have escaped the fate that attended the works of his contemporaries. His style and manner are highly commended by Quintillian and Cicero, whose taste and judgment, in all things relating to Roman literature, cannot be doubted. The Roman people had such confidence in the judgment of *Cæcilius*, that when Terence offered his first play to the Ediles, they referred him to Cæcilius to decide upon its merits.

Terence was by birth an African—a native of Carthage. He was sold as a slave to a Roman senator, who observing in him a brilliant and aspiring genius, educated him with great care, and afterwards liberated him. Having a taste for dramatic poetry, he applied himself to the study of the Greek dramatic writers, and not only chose Menander as his model, but translated, it is said, no less than one hundred of his comedies, from which circumstance, some of his contemporaries, who were envious of his rising fame, accused him of plagiarism—a charge often made by those who "hate that excellence they cannot reach." In dramatic composition, he could not have selected a better model for imitation than Menander, who, as we have seen, was styled the "Prince of the new comedy," as a just tribute to his superior merits, and if he had done no more to deserve their approbation, the Roman people were greatly indebted to him for introducing to their acquaintance the works of this distinguished poet. When Terence offered the "Andrian," the first production of his muse, to the Ediles for representation, they directed him to submit it to the judgment of Cæcilius, and when, with all the trepidation of a young author, Terence presented himself before the old poet, he found him seated at table; Cæcilius placed him on a low seat near him, and Terence began to read. He had scarcely finished the first scene, when Cæcilius invited him to sup with him, and after the repast, having finished the piece, he highly praised the performance, and recommended it to the Ediles. This recommendation was the more flattering, and is the more remakable, as authors, particularly poets, are not much in the habit of bestowing praises upon those who may be considered rivals. Quintillian entertained a much higher opinion of the talents of Terence, and his skill in dramatic composition, than any of his predecessors, and pronounced his comedies the most refined and elegant which had appeared upon the Roman stage. An English author, speaking of the works of the "elegant disciple of Menander," as he called Terence, remarks, that "delicacy and sweetness are the characteristics of Terence. His poetic images are all represented in the most clear and conspicuous expression; but his characters are too general and uniform, nor are they marked with those discriminating peculiarities that distinguish one man from another, and his plots are too complicated and intricate."

Horace in his epistle to Augustus, speaks of the dramatic poets we have mentioned in the following language:

Ennius et sapiens, et fortis, et alter Homerus
Ut critici dicunt, leviter curare videtur
Quo promissa cadant, et somnia Pythagorea.
Nævius in manibus non est, at mentibus hæret
Pene recens; adeo sanctum est vetus omne poema,
Ambigitur quoties, uter utro sit prior; aufert
Pacuvius docti famam senis, Accius alti;
Dicitur Afrani toga convenisse Menandro;
Plautus ad exemplar Siculi properare Epicharmi;
Vincere Cæcilius gravitate, Terentius arte.
Hor. L. 2, Ep. 1.

Ennius the brave, the lofty and the wise,
Another Homer in the critic's eyes,
Forgets his promise, now secure of fame,
And heeds no more his Pythagorean dream.
No longer Nevius or his plays remain;
Yet we remember ever pleasing scene;
So much can time its awful sanction give
In sacred fame to bid a poem live.
Whate'er disputes of ancient poets rise,
In some one excellence their merit lies:
What depth of learning old Pacuvius shows!
With strong sublime the page of Accius glows;
Menander's comic robe Afanius wears;
Plautus as rapid in his plots appears
As Epicharmus; Terence charms with art,
And grave Cæcilius sinks into the heart.
Francis.

CHAPTER IX.

Literature of the Romans: Lucretius, Terrentius Varo. Reign of Augustus; Virgil, Ovid, Tibullus, Propertius, Catullus, Horace, Lucan, Persius, Juvenal, Martial, Phædrus.

Didactic poetry, or that more elevated species of poetic composition, the direct object of which is, to convey instruction on religious, moral or philosophical subjects, was almost, if not altogether, unknown, until the time of Lucretius, who was contemporary with Cicero. Before this period, dramatic poetry was the only species cultivated to any extent, which was calculated to excite attention, and reward the poet, or advance his

literary fame. About this time, however, a visible and important change took place, not only in the manners and customs of the Roman people, but in their modes of thinking on subjects connected with literature. The stern maxims of Cato the censor, although supported by a few of his school, were fast yielding to more liberal and elevated ideas, and Rome began to estimate the value and feel the influence of literary attainments. The conquest of Greece had introduced among them the elegant literature of that celebrated land:

> When conquer'd Greece brought in her captive arts,
> She triumph'd o'er her savage conquerors' hearts;
> Taught our rough verse its numbers to refine,
> And our rough style with elegance to shine.
>
> *Francis' Hor.*

The works of Socrates, of Plato, of Aristotle, of Homer and others, were becoming familiar to the Roman youth, and exciting that spirit of inquiry and emulation, which burst forth in full splendor, under the munificent patronage of Augustus and Mæcenas.

Lucretius, a celebrated poet and philosopher, was descended from an illustrious family, and was born about 100 years before Christ. He received the rudiments of his education at Rome, but was sent to Athens for instruction in philosophy and the different branches of science. At Athens he embraced the philosophical doctrines of the Epicurean sect, of which he became a zealous and able advocate. Much of our knowledge of the doctrines of Epicurus, is derived from his poem "On the nature of things," in which he has set forth and explained, the peculiar tenets of the sect, in a style of much sweetness and harmony of versification. This celebrated poem, which has given deserved immortality to the name of Lucretius, was principally written in the retirement of his villa, whither he had withdrawn, as well to avoid engaging in the political divisions that distracted the empire, as to pursue at leisure his philosophical studies. An admirable translation of this poem has been presented to the public by Dr. Good, well known for his medical and other writings, in which he has not only carefully preserved the true meaning of his author, but has presented him to his English readers, in a style of versification that cannot fail to attract.

In this poem are displayed a bold and towering genius, and a

mind, capable of grasping the most abstruse and difficult subjects. In common with his master, he considered the soul a subtle corporeal substance, and consequently, not immortal, but subject to decay, and that man is the "blind idolater of chance," destined to

> "———— wander through eternity;
> To perish rather, swallow'd up and lost
> In the wide womb of uncreated night,
> Devoid of sense and motion."

These doctrines are repugnant to our ideas of the wisdom and justice of the Creator, but we should remember that, before the "sun of righteousness" enlightened the world, and brought salvation on his "healing wings," the greatest and most learned of the ancient philosophers had very imperfect ideas of the Supreme Being, or a future state of existence—the light of reason and philosophy, as then taught, afforded but faint glimmerings of a blessed eternity. It is even wonderful that this celebrated poem is as perfect as it is, and so free from greater absurdities and extravagant fancies, as a great portion of it is said to have been written during the intervals of mental derangement, with which he was afflicted. Lucretius put an end to his own existence, about 54 years before Christ.

Contemporary with Lucretius was *Terrentius Varro*, who was both poet and philosopher, as well as Lucretius, and was distinguished for his great learning. *Varro* wrote a great many volumes, embracing the whole circle of learning then cultivated, namely, antiquity, chronology, geography, natural and civil history, philosophy, criticism and poetry, in all of which he was distinguished. All that remain of the works of this voluminous writer, are a treatise "On Agriculture" and a few fragments on various subjects. *Varro* was the friend of Cicero, by whom he was recommended to Brutus as questor. After the celebrated battle of Philippi, which proved so fatal to the fortunes of Brutus, *Varro* attached himself to Pompey, and, in the time of triumvirate he was proscribed with Cicero, but more fortunate in the sequel than his illustrious companion in misfortune, he escaped the dagger of the assassin. After the restoration of tranquillity and the establishment of Augustus in the empire, he was permitted to return to Rome, where he died in the 88th year of his age.

About thirty-one years before the Christian era, the affairs of the Romans took a new turn. After a long series of civil wars,

proscriptions and assassinations, the republic, whose victorious standard so long waved over a prostrate world, ceased to exist, and on its mighty ruins rose the feeble fabric of the Roman empire; the simple insignia of her consuls were exchanged for the sceptre of royalty, which, in its turn, has been exchanged for the crozier. The decisive battles of Philippi and Actium had put down the rivals and opponents of Octavius, and had given him the empire of the world, with the title of *Augustus*, by which he has since been known. Notwithstanding the charge, that during his connexion with Anthony and Lepidus, *Augustus* even exceeded his associates in cruelty, he was naturally inclined to humanity, and after the establishment of his power, he became the patron of all that was refined in literature and elegant in art. Protected by his power and encouraged by his patronage, and that of Mæcenas, a numerous corps of candidates for fame, in the different departments of literature, entered the lists, and contended for the prize which is so highly valued in all civilized nations. During his reign, learned men, and such as were distinguished for their skill and proficiency in the fine arts, enjoyed a consideration and influence never before enjoyed in Rome.

Among the distinguished men of the time of Augustus, *Virgil* holds a conspicuous place. He was born at Andes, a village near Mantua, about 70 years before Christ. He was educated at Cremona, and the first years of his life were spent there in the peaceful occupation of agriculture, and occasional devotion to the muses. When Augustus received the Roman empire, in order to reward his veteran troops, he distributed among them the lands that lay about Cremona and Mantua. In this distribution, *Virgil* not only lost his land, but narrowly escaped losing his life, in a contest with a soldier with whom he ventured to dispute the possession of his "pleasant fields and native home." After the loss of his land, accompanied by his father, he repaired to Rome, where he attracted the notice of Augustus, who restored him his lost property. As a tribute of gratitude he composed the first eclogue, in which, whilst he relates his own good fortune, he feelingly portrays the calamities and distresses of his Mantuan friends, and the gloomy prospects which lie before them:

> At nos hinc alii sitientes ibimus Afros,
> Pars Scythiam, et rapidum Cretæ veniemus Oaxem.

Et penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos
En unquam patrios longo post tempore fines,
Pauperis et tuguri congestum cespite culmen,
Post aliquot, mea regna videns mirabor aristas?
Impius hæc tam culta novalia miles habebit?
Vir. Ecl. 1, 65.

But we must beg our bread in climes unknown,
Between the scorching or the freezing zone,
And some to far Oaxis shall be sold;
Or try the Lybian heat or Scythian cold.
The rest among the Britons be confined,
A race of men from all the world disjoin'd.
O must the wretched exiles ever mourn,
Nor after length of rolling years return?
Are we condemned by fate's unjust decree,
No more our houses nor our homes to see?
Or shall we mount again the rural throne,
And rule the country kingdoms once our own?
Dryden.

After the eclogues, he wrote the *Georgics*, a philosophical and practical poem on agricultural pursuits, the first idea of which he received from the "Weeks and Days" of Hesiod. This poem he dedicated to his friend and patron Mæcenas.

Quid faciat lætas segetes; quo sidere terram
Vertere, Mæcenas, ulmisque adjungere vites.
Conveniat; quæ cura boum, qui cultus habendo
Sit pecori: atque apibus quanta experientia parcis:
Hinc canere incipiam. ——————
Geo. Lib. 1—1.

What makes a plenteous harvest, when to turn
The fruitful soil, and when to sow the corn;
The care of sheep, of oxen and of kine;
And how to raise on elms the teeming vine;
The birth and genius of the frugal bee,
I sing, Mæcenas, and I sing to thee.
Dryden.

Having been himself a practical agriculturalist, he gives directions with regard to the different kinds of tillage, proper for different soils—the management of fruit trees—the proper method of cultivating the different kinds of vegetable productions, useful to man—in short, he gives ample instructions in every thing relating to agriculture, not in the homely style of modern writers on such subjects, but with all the eloquence of the most attractive versification. His last and greatest work, that upon

which his fame, as a poet, principally rests, was the *Æneid*, upon the composition of which he employed eleven years, and unfortunately died before he applied to it his last corrections. It is not our purpose, nor does it come within our plan, to enter into a minute analysis, or criticism of this celebrated and immortal poem. It is intended to celebrate the escape of Æneas from the destruction of Troy, his subsequent settlement in Italy and the foundation of a kingdom that was the cradle of Rome. The adventures of Æneas and his companions, who had escaped the Grecian sword and the flames of their native city, and set out in search of some retreat from their misfortunes, are of themselves calculated to enlist the feelings and excite attention—yet, as if fearful of wearying his readers by a continued recitation of hairbreadth escapes, and "moving accidents by flood and field," he has ingeniously contrived to introduce several episodes of peculiar interest and striking beauty—such as that of Nisus and Eurydice, the funeral of Pallas and others—these relieve the monotony of the narrative and enhance the interest of the poem. Although defective in many particulars, which, perhaps would have been corrected, had the author lived to have applied the finishing hand, it is nevertheless, "distinguished for its elegance and tenderness, and although it is less animated and less sublime than the Illiad, it has fewer negligencies and greater variety, and supports more of a correct and regular dignity throughout the whole."

Virgil was also a philosopher, having been early instructed in the doctrines of Epicurus, which run through most of his writings. Notwithstanding he may be properly considered as belonging to the Epicurean sect, he sometimes introduces the opinions of other sects, as in the fourth Georgic, he gives the doctrines of the disciples of Zeno with regard to the origin of things:

His quidam signis atque hæc exempla secuti,
Esse apibus partem divinæ mentis, et haustus
Ætherios dixere: deum namque ire per omnes
Terrasque, tractusque maris, cœlumque profundum
Hinc pecudes, armenta, viros, genus omne ferarum
Quemque sibi tenues nascentem arcessere vitas,
Scilicit huc reddi deinde, ac resoluta referri
Omnia: nec morte esse locum; sed viva volare
Sideris in numerum, atque alto succedere cœlo.

Geor. Lib. IV. 220

Induced by such examples some have taught
That bees have portions of etherial thought;
Endued with particles of heavenly fires;
For God the whole created mass inspires
Through heaven and earth and ocean's depth he throws
His influence round and kindles as he goes.
Hence flocks and herds, and men, and beasts, and fowls,
With breath are quicken'd, and attract their souls.
Hence take the forms his prescience did ordain,
And into him at length resolve again.
No room is left for death, they mount the sky
And to their own congenial planets fly.
Dryden.

In the 52d year of his age, Virgil set out for Greece, with the design of putting the finishing hand to the Æneid, and of devoting the remainder of his days to the study of philosophy, beneath the shade of the venerable groves, where Socrates, Plato and Aristotle delighted the listening crowd; but being seized with illness he returned to Brundusium, where he died. At his request his body was conveyed to Naples, and interred near that city, at the entrance of what is now called the Grotto of Posillipo.

The reign of Augustus was also distinguished by the genius of *Ovid*, *Tibullus*, *Propertius* and *Horace*. These celebrated poets were caressed and flattered by the courtiers of Augustus, and enriched by the liberal bounty of the emperor himself, in a manner hitherto unprecedented among literary men. Augustus became the theme of their warmest panegyrics, and his deeds and character were particularly celebrated by *Horace*, who was an accomplished courtier, and well knew the susceptibility of his imperial patron to the blandishments of flattery, and who lost no opportunity of paying his court. The numerous odes, satires and epistles which he addressed him, may be considered either as so many evidences of fawning adulation, or the effusions of a grateful heart for protection and patronage. Thus in the first epistle of the second book, which is regarded by critics as one of his best performances, he thus addresses him:

Præsenti tibi maturos largimur honores
Jurandasque tuum per nomen ponimus aras,
Nil oriturum alias, nil ortum tale fatentes.
Ep. 1, *Lib.* 2.

Yet Rome to thee her living honors pays;
By thee we swear, to thee our altars raise.

While we confess no prince so great, so wise,
Hath ever risen, or shall ever rise.

Francis.

The works of *Ovid* have rendered his name immortal in the annals of literature, while his misfortunes have excited a feeling of compassion, not so much on account of their severity, as the mystery in which the causes which gave rise to them are veiled. He was born at Sulmo, ninety miles from Rome, about forty-three years before the birth of Christ. Being intended for the bar, his father sent him to Rome, and afterwards to Athens, to improve himself in oratory. He made considerable progress in the studies necessary to prepare himself for the arena of forensic controversy, and would, probably, have made a conspicuous figure at the bar, but seduced by the charms of the muses, he determined to abandon the dry technicalities of law, and devote himself to the cultivation of poetry—an art more consonant with his feelings and better suited to the natural bent of his genius. His talents soon acquired for him the patronage of Augustus, and gained the friendship of the wits and poets who crowded his court. For a time he sailed smoothly on the current of life, gently propelled by the breath of princely favor, but suddenly a storm gathered, which burst upon him, and he was banished by the emperor to Tamos, on the western shores of the Euxine sea. Various causes have been assigned for this rigorous treatment of the poet, all of which, however, are little more than mere conjecture; but whatever may have excited his displeasure, all the entreaties and all the flatteries of Ovid could not procure his recal from Augustus, or his successor, Tiberius. He died at Tamos, in the 59th year of his age, 17 years after Christ.

Et jacet Euxinis vates Romanus in oris;
Romanum vatem barbara terra tegit.
Terra tegit vatem, tenerosque lusit amores
Barbara; quam gelides aluit Ister aquis.

Politianus.

A Roman bard lies on the Euxine's side!
Barbarian earth a Roman poet holds!
Barbarian earth wash'd by cold Ister's tide,
The poet of the tender loves enfolds.

Arden.

His greatest work, that on which he bestowed most labor, is the *Metamorphoses*. This poem is divided into fifteen books, and

is not only a beautiful present from antiquity to posterity, on account of its smooth and elegant versification, but is curious and interesting for the many traditions and circumstances of ancient mythology, which are so ingeniously woven together, as to form a complete and connected poem. Upon this work his fame principally rests, although his great genius was powerfully displayed in his minor works, in one of which, the "Art of Love," he has misused his talents and employed them in the encouragement of vice and licentiousness. Although decorated with all the magic of poetry, it is a production of so licentious a character, that it ought never to be put into the hands of youth, as it contains maxims and opinions of the most pernicious tendency, and calculated to destroy the very seeds of virtue in the youthful bosom. His elegies were composed during his exile, and are generally written upon one subject, that of his banishment from the pleasures and refinements of Rome, to a dreary and comfortless habitation on the shores of the Euxine. In his various writings, with that liberality which marks a generous mind, he took occasion to offer the tribute of just praise to the most celebrated contemporary authors, and he mentions many, in terms of commendation, whose works have been lost, and who are only known to the present generation through his eulogiums.

Tibullus was a Roman knight, and, for a time followed the profession of arms, and as a soldier accompanied his friend Messala Corvinus, to the island of Corcyra, but preferring literary ease to the toils and honors of war, he returned and established himself at Rome. He had attached himself to the cause of Brutus, and lost his property when the soldiers of the triumvirate were rewarded with the lands of their enemies. Tibullus enjoyed the friendship of Ovid and Horace, but as he did not condescend, like some of his contemporaries, to flatter the pride of Augustus, he did not enjoy quite so much of the sunshine of imperial favor. Four books of elegies are all that remain of his works. He wrote in a pure and elegant style, and with a charm of expression peculiarly adapted to elegiac composition which has procured him the title of "Prince of elegiac poetry." His elegies have been translated into English verse by various authors, and have been selected by others as models for imitation. The following translation, or rather imitation of one of his elegies, is by Lord Lytleton:

Say, my Cerinthus, does thy tender breast
Feel the same feverish heats that mine molest?
Alas! I only wish for health again,
Because I think my lover shares my pain;
For what would health avail to wretched me,
If you could, unconcern'd, my illness see?

Laharpe, speaking of Tibullus, uses the following language; "son style est d'une élégance exquise, son gout est pur, sa composition irréproachable. Il a un charme d'expression qu' aucune traduction ne peut rendre, et il ne peut être bien senti que par le cœur. Une harmonie delicieuse porte au fond de l'âme les impressions les plus douces: c'est le livre des amans. Il a de plus ce goût pour la campagne, qui s'accorde si bien avec l'amour; car la nature est toujours plus belle quand on n'y voit qu'un seul objet."*

Propertius was the son of a Roman knight attached to the interests of Anthony, and who was proscribed by Augustus. When tranquillity was restored to the Roman empire, Propertius settled in Rome, where he attracted the notice of Augustus and Mæcenas, and acquired consequent distinction and consideration. He died nineteen years before the birth of Christ. The poetry of *Propertius* consisted chiefly of elegies, of which four books remain. In his elegies there is a richness of style and dignity of expression which seem to have qualified him for a higher order of composition, and which induced Mæcenas to request him to write an epic poem, of which Augustus was to be the hero. This request he refused, being unwilling to sacrifice for fame the freedom of his own inclinations, upon the altar of flattery. Notwithstanding the energy of his language and beauty of versification, he is not free from censure, on account of a voluptuousness of expression which he frequently employs—a fault which, in some degree, attaches to most poets of the age, and may be attributed to the manners of the times, which wanted that delicacy of refinement that characterizes modern society.

Horace may justly be considered as the first Roman *lyric poet*. From the foundation of the city to the time of Augustus, the Romans knew no other species of lyric poetry, than the verses called *Salii*, a kind of ode chanted in honor of their great men. In lyric poetry, Horace had before him as models, the produc-

* Cours de Litterature, tome 2. p. 158.

tions of Pindar, Anacreon, and other distinguished poets of Greece, and so successful was he in his imitation of their style and manner, that he is pronounced by many equal to Pindar. This distinguished poet was the son of a freedman, who sent him to Athens to study philosophy. There he embraced the doctrines of the Epicurean sect, which he afterwards abjured and became a stoic. On his return to Rome, he attached himself to the fortunes of Brutus, and was engaged in the celebrated battle of Philippi, where he discovered that he had no talents for war. Of his disgrace as a soldier he speaks himself, in a strain of humor:

Tecum Philippos, et celerem fugam
Sensi, relicta non bene parmula;
Cum fracta virtus, et minaces
Turpe solum tetigere mento.
Sed me per hostes Mercurius celer
Denso paventem sustulit acre.

Car. 7, Lib. 2.

With thee I saw Philippi's plain,
Its fatal rout, a fearful scene!
And dropp'd alas! the inglorious shield
Where valor's self was forc'd to yield.
Where soil'd in dust the vanquish'd lay
And breath'd the indignant soul away,
But me when dying with my fear
Though warring hosts, inwrapp'd in air
Swift did the god of wit convey.

Francis.

After the battle of Philippi, *Horace* abandoned the profession of arms, in which, from his first essay, he was not likely to gain much distinction, and applied himself to the cultivation of an art, of which he was destined to become a distinguished ornament. On his arrival at Rome, he concealed himself in the house of a friend, and, in a short time, was introduced to Virgil, who, with that generosity that belongs to great minds, warmly embraced his cause, and not only procured the restitution of his property, but the favor of Mæcenas and the protection of Augustus. The latter was so captivated by his wit, that he often invited him to his table, and took great pleasure in his society. He died in the 58th year of his age, about three weeks before his friend Mæcenas.

Horace is the only one of the latin *lyric* poets whose works have reached us—there were others who courted the lyric muse,

but, according to Quintillian, without much success; indeed, he assures us that there were no others whose works deserved to be transmitted to posterity. Quintillian was a great admirer of Horace, and extols his great merit as a poet, and his judgment has been confirmed by modern criticism. His satires and epistles are full of good sense, and his odes are the best specimens of that kind of poetry among the Romans, evincing in almost every line a polished and delicate taste, worthy the age he honored. We cannot conclude our notice of Horace more to the purpose, than with the following remarks of Dr. Blair: "No poet supports a moral sentiment with more dignity, touches a gay one more happily, or possesses the art of trifling more agreeably. His language is so fortunate that with a single word or epithet, he often conveys whole descriptions to the fancy. Hence he has been, and ever will continue to be, a favorite author with all persons of taste."

Horace was the last poet who distinguished the reign of Augustus. The period which intervened between the death of the latter and the accession of Commodus to the Roman purple, constitutes an era in which general literature flourished to a considerable degree, notwithstanding the oppressive government of cruel and tyrannical rulers. Although every crime and every vice denounced in the decalogue, and which can disgrace human nature, marked the characters and distinguished the reigns of the seven immediate successors of Augustus, yet genius and learning found protection and encouragement under the mild and equitable rule of Vespasian, Titus, Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, princes who honored the diadem they wore.

That the character and genius of a government have ever had a considerable influence upon the state of literature, the history of all civilized nations affords abundant proof, and is readily admitted by all who have paid any attention to the subject. This was apparent under the liberal government of Greece, where every man was free to speak his sentiments in the public assemblies, or in the streets; and also, under the different forms of the Roman government, whether regal, republican or imperial, and the rigor or mildness with which they were respectively administered. We have already seen, that Greece had attained a high rank in literature long before it was even known in Rome;

but the latter city having at length introduced it within its walls, and its advantages comprehended, a strong impression was made upon the public mind, and, notwithstanding the trouble and confusion incident to civil wars and internal commotions, it spread with rapidity, and under Augustus, who was anxious to direct the people from the contemplation of the means by which he attained to power, it grew and flourished like a tree planted by the water's side. As literature flourished during the last days of the republic, and under the liberal sway of Augustus, so the more despotic the government became, the more did it feel its corrupting influence in that artificial, flattering and servile style which marked the writings of many; thus we find *Lucan*, although a stern republican in principle, addressing Nero, in a strain of the most fulsome adulation:

Sed neque in Arctoo sedem tibi legeris orbe,
Nec polus adversi calidus qua mergitur austri;
Ætheris immensi partem si presseris unam
Sentiet axis onus. Librati pondera Cœli
Orbe tenem medio.

Lucan Phar. Leb. 1, 53.

But Oh! whatever be thy godhead great,
Fix not in regions too remote thy seat;
Nor deign thou near the frozen bear to shine,
Nor where the southern sultry stars decline.
Press not too much on any part the sphere,
Hard were the task thy weight divine to bear;
Soon would the axis feel the unusual load,
And, groaning, bend beneath the incumbent God;
O'er the mid orb more equal shalt thou rise,
And with a juster balance fix the skies.

Rowe.

The bold and manly freedom of thought and action which distinguished the republican character disappeared, and genius and talents, restrained in their exercise, dared not give utterance to their true inspirations; hence, under Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero, we find but few poets, historians, orators or philosophers. But when the sceptre fell from their unskilful hands, and was held in the vigorous grasp of a Vespasian, a Titus and an Antoninus, genius again came forth from her hiding place, and learning was permitted, not only to see the light, but extend its influence; but unhappily for mankind, short was its reign. On the death of Aurelius, the profligate Commodus ascended the throne of the Cæsars, and so withering was

his touch, that from this time may be dated the decline of learning.

Although during the period abovementioned, several great men in the different departments of learning flourished, prose appears to have been more cultivated than poetry. The muses, who, under the reign of Augustus were unrestrained in their flight, and soared aloft on fancy's wings, as if nearly exhausted by the mighty efforts that inspired a Horace, a Virgil and an Ovid, seem to have slumbered amidst the retired and shady groves of Parnassus, awakening only to give vigor and energy to the genius of Lucan and a few others.

Lucan was born at Corduba, (now Cordova) in Spain, about the year 39 A. D. He was the nephew of the celebrated philosopher *Seneca*, and removed to Rome during the reign of Nero, the unworthy grandson of Germanicus, where he hoped to gain distinction and bask in the sunshine of imperial favor. He possessed great talents for poetry, but on his arrival in Rome he prostituted them in singing the praises of Nero, by whom he was successively invested with the dignities of Questor and Augur, before the age prescribed by law. Nero was as vain of his talents as a poet, as he was conspicuous for vice and cruelty, and challenged Lucan to a poetical contest. Lucan, full of youthful ardor, and ambitious of distinction, but forgetful of the situation in which he stood, and the exalted rank of his competitor, entered with spirit into the contest, and gained the prize, which so enraged his imperial rival, that he determined to be revenged. An opportunity soon offered to satisfy the wounded pride of Nero, and at the same time, gratify his thirst for blood, in the detection of the conspiracy of Piso, in which Lucan was concerned. On being arrested he was exhorted to reveal the names of his accomplices, under the promise of pardon, when, as the historian Tacitus declares in his "Annals," he had the baseness to accuse his own mother; his meanness did not avail him, and the only favor the wretched man received was, to choose the manner of his death. He had his veins opened in a warm bath, and died in the 26th year of his age, A. D. 65. However high a character ancient and modern writers have conferred on him as a poet, and however deserving he may be as such, his reputation as a man must greatly suffer for the mean spirit he

betrayed, when, to save his own life, he denounced his mother as a conspirator.

Of his writings, nothing remains but his *Pharsalia*, which he left in an unfinished state. This poem is founded on the civil wars that raged between Cæsar and Pompey, and terminated with the battle of Pharsalia, where Pompey was defeated with great loss, and all his aspiring hopes cut off. Cæsar and Pompey were two of the most celebrated men of the age in which they lived, and have been surpassed by none of ancient or modern times, in those high-wrought qualities which constitute the accomplished soldier and commander; but they were ambitious—both aspiring to erect the fabric of their own power upon the prostrate liberties of their country. The fortune of Cæsar prevailed, and Pompey, after filling so large a space in the public eye, fell a miserable victim to "ill-weaved ambition." In all his misfortunes Pompey was great.

——————— Stat magni nominis umbra,
Qualis, frugifero quercus sublimis in agro.
Exuvias veteres populi, sacrataque gestans
Dona ducum; nec jam validis radicibus hærens,
Pondere fixa suo est; nudos que per æra ramos
Effundens, trunco, non frondibus, efficit umbram
At quamvis primo nutet casura sub Euro,
Et circum silvæ firmo se robore tollant,
Sola tamen colitur.

Phar. Lib. 1, 32,

He stood the shadow of what once he was;
So in the field with Ceres' bounty spread,
Uprears some ancient oak his reverend head,
Chaplets and sacred gifts his brows adorn,
And spoils of war by mighty heroes won;
But the first vigor of his root now gone,
He stands dependant on his weight alone.
All care his native branches are undisplay'd
And with his leafless trunk he forms a shade;
Yet though the winds his ruin daily threat,
As every blast would heave him from his seat;
Though thousand fairer trees the field supplies
That rich in youthful verdure round him rise,
Fix'd in his ancient seat he yields to none
And wears the honors of the grove alone.

Rowe.

The exploits of these celebrated men form the principal subject of the poem, and, if the versification of Lucan does not pos-

sess the force, freedom and energy of Homer and Virgil, it will be recollected that he wrote under the tyranny of Nero, and, being only twenty-six years of age, he could not possess the ripened judgment and the experience of the fathers of the Greek and Latin epic. The learned, even of modern times, are divided as to the merits of the author of Pharsalia; by some he is ranked among epic poets, by others as a mere declaimer, destitute of all the qualities which constitute the great poet. Without entering into a controversy on this subject, or setting up our humble judgment against learned and labored criticism, we only observe, that the dispassionate critic must pronounce, that although unfinished, it exhibits many passages of genuine poetic inspiration and of spirited description.

At this period flourished *Persius*, the immediate successor of Horace as a satirist. Horace was the first Roman who acquired fame as a writer of satires. As he was naturally of a gay and lively disposition, and possessed none of the "acrid temper" that Cowper attributes to most satirists, his satires were generally of that easy, graceful and polite, yet severe character, which reproves without employing low and unbecoming language. The true end of satire is, the improvement of society and the reformation of manners, by censuring vice and vicious characters, and, when skilfully used, it is highly beneficial in correcting the vices and follies of the times; but

> Unless a love of virtue light the flame,
> Satire is, more than those he brands, to blame:
> He hides behind a magisterial air
> His own offences, and stripes others bare.
>
> *Cowper.*

The lash of satire, when judiciously and fearlessly applied, often produces more useful results, than the labored dissertation over which the midnight oil has been wasted, or even the most impressive exhortation from the sacred desk.

Persius was a native of Volatura, a town of Etruria, and, from his own account, was designed by nature for a satirist. In the first satire, addressing his friend, he says:

> Quid faciam? sed sum petulanti splene cachinno.
>
> *Per. Sat.* 1, 12.

——— Nature fram'd me of satiric mould
And spleen, too petulant to be controll'd.
Gifford.

Persius removed to Rome at sixteen years of age, where he became a disciple of *Cornutus*, a philosopher of the school of Zeno, to whom he ever after continued so firmly attached, as to exhibit a pleasing instance of grateful affection of a pupil for his master. In the fifth satire he thus speaks of his preceptor:

——— Tibi nunc, hortante Camœna,
Excutienda damus præcordia; quantaque nostræ
Pars tua sit, Cornute, animæ tibi, dulcis amice,
Ostendisse juvat. Pulsa; dignoscere cautus
Quid solidum crepet, et pictæ tectoria linguæ.
His ego centenas ausim deposcere voces
Ut, quantum mihi te sinuoso in pectore fixi,
Voce traham pura; totumque hoc verba resignent
Quod latet arcana non enarribile, fibra.
Per. Sat. V. 22.

Yes, best of mortals! 't is my pride to own
How much my breast is filled with you alone!
Ring them—for to your practis'd ear the sound
Will show the solid, and where guile is found
Beneath the varnish'd tongue. For this, in fine,
I dar'd to wish an hundred voices mine;
Proud to declare how closely twin'd you dwell—
How deeply fix'd in my heart's inmost cell:
And paint, in words; ah, could they paint the whole,
The ineffable sensations of my soul.
Gifford.

Such sentiments, so feelingly expressed, mark an elevated mind, and one whose heart was warmed by the amiable and benevolent principles of our nature, notwithstanding the "petulance and spleen" which he attributes to himself. The satires of Persius, that have reached the present time, are but six in number, which have been translated with spirit and elegance by Gifford, and are distinguished for perspicuity of style and delicacy of language. Persius lived in the reign of Nero—in that degenerate age, when vice and cruelty reigned triumphant and lorded it over fallen man. If Persius was not as open and daring in his attacks as his contemporary Juvenal, he nevertheless lashed with severity, whatever he undertook to satirize; it is, however, attributed to him as a fault, that while he ridiculed the idle and vicious habits of the young nobility, and the faults of poets and orators, he permitted greater culprits, those who

were trampling upon the rights and liberties of his country, to pass with but slight castigation. Satirical poems, in general, lose much of their interest, by the lapse of time and ignorance of the particular circumstances that occasioned them; thus many of the satires of Persius and Juvenal, and the epigrams of Martial, appear to us obscure and almost unintelligible, when to their contemporaries, they exhibited much biting sarcasm, and were read with avidity, because they were conversant with the characters alluded to, and the errors and vices censured. Persius died in the thirtieth year of his age.

Juvenal was born about the year 38, A. D., at Aquinam, a town of the Volsci. He first intended to pursue the profession of law, and much of his time was, therefore, employed in declamatory exercises, and such other studies and preparations as were deemed necessary to attain distinction at the bar. Possessing a talent for poetry, he abandoned the law, and applied himself to that particular species for which he was afterwards so distinguished, namely, *satire*. He appears to have possessed the essential requisites of a satirist; among others, a fearless and independent spirit, which refused to sing the praises of such despicable tyrants as Nero and Domitian. Regardless of consequences, he boldly attacked Paris, a celebrated player, the favorite of Nero and Domitian, who first felt his shafts. Through the influence of Paris, he was sent by Domitian into Egypt, as a kind of banishment, from which he was recalled by Nerva. He lived to the advanced age of eighty years, and died under the reign of Trajan. The satires of Juvenal that have reached the present time, amount to sixteen in number, and have been translated by Gifford, who has transfused into his translation all the lofty and independent spirit of the original, avoiding the low and indecent language in which Juvenal sometimes indulged, and which indeed, disarmed some of his satires of their sting. As a poet, in the particular species which he chose for the exercise of his talents, he holds an elevated rank, which ancient and modern critics have united to assign him. His shafts were chiefly directed against the vices of the degenerate age in which he lived, and were, in general, sufficiently keen and pointed to produce the desired effect.

Martial was a native of Spain, and went to Rome about the twentieth year of his age, for the purpose of studying law. Like

Juvenal and Persius, he deserted the courts of law for the court of the muses, and possessing a pliant temper, by which he became "all things to all men," he gained the favor of the great by gross flattery and indiscriminate panegyrics. The profligate Domitian, the degenerate son of Vespasian, was the peculiar subject of his praise. The first book of his epigrams is nearly one continued strain of adulation. Although Martial extolled this despicable and worthless tyrant while he wielded the sceptre, as a pattern of public and private virtue, when dead he represented him as the most vicious of men. The virtuous Trajan treated him with deserved neglect, in consequence of which he retired to his native country, where he passed the remainder of his days, neglected and forgotten.

The epigram, for which Martial was distinguished, is a species of poetic composition, approaching nearly to the satire, having in view the same object, the censure and ridicule of vice and folly. In satire, the subject matter is sometimes much amplified and extended, whilst in the epigram, the great object of the author is to compress, and bring the subject to a point in a few lines. Fourteen books of his epigrams are still extant; and although they have lost much of their force, in consequence of the length of time that has elapsed, and our ignorance of the particular transactions to which they allude, yet they are remarkable for that tartness of expression and peculiar turn, which constitute the chief merit of epigrammatic writing. The following, in which he contrasts a retired life, with life in Rome, was probably written about the time of his retirement into Spain. It is the 96th epigram of the tenth book:

Me, who have liv'd so long among the great,
You wonder to hear talk of a retreat:
And a retreat so distant, as may show
No thoughts of a return, when once I go.
Give me a country, how remote soe'er,
Where happiness a moderate rate does bear,
Where poverty itself in plenty flows,
And all the solid use of riches knows.
The ground about the house maintains it, there;
The house maintains the ground about it, here;
Here even hunger 's dear; and a full board
Devours the vital substance of the lord,
The land itself does there the feast bestow,
The land itself must here to market go.
Three or four suits one winter here does waste,

One suit does there three or four winters last.
Here every frugal man must oft be cold,
And little lukewarm fires to you are sold,
There fire 's an element, as cheap and free
Almost, as any of the other three.
Stay you then here, and live among the great,
Attend their sports, and of their tables eat,
When all the bounties here of men you score
The place's bounty there shall give you more.
Conley.

Contemporary with Juvènal, Persius and Martial, were *Silius Italicus* and *Statius*. *Silius* was also originally designed for the bar, and was, for some time, a distinguished member of it, but after the death of Nero, in whose reign he was one year consul, he retired from Rome and fixed his residence near Naples, where he devoted himself to literary pursuits. He was a great admirer of Virgil, and every year celebrated his birthday with great pomp. In his writings he endeavored to imitate the style and manner of Virgil, but was not very successful. Of the works of *Silius* there remains only an historical poem in seventeen books, the subject of which is the second Punic war. In the construction of his poem he has displayed very little invention, contenting himself with scrupulously following the order and details of events as they occurred from the siege of Seguntum to the defeat of Hannibal and the subjection of Carthage to the victorious Scipio. *Silius* died in the 75th year of his age.

Statius was born at Naples in the reign of Domitian. He was the author of many works, the most celebrated of which is, the *Thebais*, in twelve books, the subject of this poem is, the unhappy quarrel between Etrocles and Polynices, the sons of Œdipus, who, on the death of their father, agreed to sway, by turns, the sceptre of Thebes. His poem was dedicated to Domitian, whom the poet, with servile flattery, ranked among the gods. Statius was very popular as a poet at Rome, and Martial informs us, that vast crowds were accustomed to attend when any part of his *Thebais* was to be recited in public. Modern criticism has not, in this instance, confirmed the judgment of his contemporaries, but has pronounced his poem to be without interest, and his style bombastic and affected. Laharpe, whose opinions we have frequently adopted, because we believe them to be the result of correct taste and sound judgment, speaks of Statius in a tone of contempt, and regards his works as scarcely worth

preservation. Statius was the author also of several dramatic works, which he is supposed to have written to procure bread. He died about 100 years after Christ.

We will conclude our notice of the Roman poets with *Phædrus*, the fabulist, who was by birth a Thracian, and was one of the freedmen of Augustus. Fables were pieces of wit that made their appearance in very early ages of the world, and were used to inculcate some useful and instructive moral lesson, in language familiar and easily to be comprehended by all to whom they were addressed. As an original and inventive genius we know nothing of Phœdrus; he is only known to us as the translator of Æsop's fables into iambic verses. The works of Phœdrus escaped the observation of the moderns, until about the close of the sixteenth century, when a copy was accidentally discovered in the library of St. Remi, at Rheims.

Notwithstanding the great improvements introduced into theatrical representations by the genius and talents of Plautus and Terence, and the taste that many of the Roman people imbibed for such amusements during the reign of Augustus, it is a remarkable fact, that Rome produced no dramatic writer of any reputation after Terence; at least none whose fame has been transmitted to modern times. The dearth of dramatic talent may be accounted for in the despotic nature of the government after the demise of Augustus, and in the increasing attachment of the Roman people, to the cruel and inhuman spectacles exhibited in the ampitheatres, where slaves and criminals were made to contend with the most ferocious wild beasts, and where gladiators, regularly trained to the arts of attack and defence, exhibited their skill and prowess in deadly contests with each other. Although theatrical amusements, in which were united intellectual pleasure and the gratification of the senses, restrained, in a considerable degree, under Julius Cæsar and Augustus, the combats of gladiators, yet, under those monsters of iniquity and cruelty, Nero and Domitian, they were revived with full force, and continued to *amuse* an assembly of Romans, until finally abolished by the emperor Honorius, A. D. 403. Honorius was induced to take this step in consequence of the death of Telemachus, a christian hermit, who, inspired by a holy zeal, left his cell among the mountains of Syria, to put a stop to such cruel exhibitions, and throwing himself amidst the combatants in the

arena, with that benevolent intent, was stoned to death by the spectators. In these cruel exhibitions, so revolting to *our* feelings, and so repugnant to all *our* ideas of amusement, some of the emperors, particularly those we have named, greatly delighted, because they gratified that thirst for blood, for which they were more distinguished, than for any great or useful quality, and, as in monarchical governments, the people are apt to imitate the manners of the great, and even follow their tastes, the genuine drama, which unites the charms of poetry and music, and which has a tendency to soften the heart and refine the manners, was forced to yield to the supremacy of gladiatorial combats. Thus it was, that in the temples of the muses, the shrines of Melpomene and Thalia were abandoned and forgotten, and dramatic poetry was neglected and uncultivated.

The shows of gladiators, which took such hold upon the Roman people, and, as we think, had a considerable influence in preventing the cultivation of dramatic poetry, were first exhibited about 400 years after the foundation of the city, by the sons of Brutus, at the funeral of their father, and for many years were only exhibited on such occasions. The magistrates at length exhibited them at the Saturnalia, or feasts in honor of Saturn, and "though calculated rather to move pity and cause horror, than to give pleasure, yet, like other scenes which excite hopes and fears, and keep the mind in suspense, they were admired by the multitude, and became frequent on all solemn occasions and festivals." We can form a pretty correct opinion of the attachment of the people to such exhibitions, when we find the virtuous Trajan, on whom a whole people conferred the title of *Optimus*, or *Most Excellent*, yielding to the predilections of his countrymen, and, on his triumph after the Dacian war, exhibiting games which continued one hundred and twenty-three days, and during which, ten thousand gladiators engaged in mortal fight for the amusement and gratification of a depraved populace:

> I see before me the gladiator lie;
> He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
> Consents to death, but conquers agony,
> And his droop'd head sinks gradually low;
> And through his side, the last drops ebbing slow
> From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
> Like the first of a thunder shower, and now

The arena swims around him: he is gone,
E're ceas'd the inhuman shout that hail'd the wretch who won!

He heard, but heeded not; his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away:
He reck'd not of the life he lost, nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay;
There were his young barbarians all at play—
There was their Dacian mother; he, their sire,
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday!

Child. Har.

Such is the influence of example when our propensities are left free and uncontrolled by the principles of humanity; and so callous do we become to the most bloody scenes by frequent exhibitions, that, according to Tacitus, the faithful and elegant historian of the times, Roman knights, senators, and even women of illustrious rank, laying aside the modesty of their sex, descended into the arena, and engaged in combat. How sadly depraved must the state of society have been, when such scenes were permitted, and how greatly inferior was the Roman to the Grecian character. The latter never permitted such foul and bloody exhibitions to pollute their theatres, nor did the lowest and most abandoned of their women ever expose their persons, as prize-fighters in the arena. The only practice among the Greeks, that approached the shows of gladiators, was considered a religious rite. In the heroic ages, according to the then usages of war, captives were sometimes slain upon a warrior's tomb, not to amuse the assembled crowd, but to appease the manes of the departed. Thus Homer relates, that at the funeral of Patroclus, Achilles slew twelve Trojan captives on his tomb:

Then, last of all, and horrible to tell,
Sad sacrifice! twelve Trojan captives fell.*

Pope.

* Schlegel's Lec.; Ken. Rom. Ant.; Cours de Lit.; Gif. Pers.; Gif. Juv.; Mad. de Stael. Inf. of Lit.; Fer. Rome.

CHAPTER X.

Literature of the Romans. Roman Historians: Pictor, Cæsar, Nepos, Livy, Paterculus, Tacitus, Quintus Curtius, Suetonius, Justin, Arrian, Pausanias.

In the present highly improved state of human knowledge in all its various departments, the importance of accurate historical records or details is so apparent to all, that their study forms a prominent portion of a polite education. We who thus feel their value, are astonished how any nation, possessing a knowledge of alphabetic writing, and consequently a certain means of preserving a record of events, should neglect a matter of so much interest, not only to themselves, but to posterity, as a faithful and connected historical narrative of the affairs of their own country. An acquaintance with the wars and revolutions which have shaken and overturned empires, and with the motives which influenced the great actors, not only affords subjects for interesting speculation, but has a tendency to banish many of the prejudices and illiberal feelings too often indulged by one nation towards another; and from this source too, we derive much of that pleasure and satisfaction which constitute the charm of social intercourse, while we are also able to distinguish virtues and qualities, which before were not perceptible, because of the false medium through which we received them. The Romans, although, no doubt, fully aware of these advantages, and of the necessity of preserving an account of the great events which were constantly transpiring, had no regular historian, of whom we have any knowledge, until the time of *Quintus Fabius Pictor*, who flourished about 225 years before the Christian era. Previously to that period, they were satisfied with their preservation in the public records, and in the detached and unconnected works of chroniclers and annalists; and most of these, embracing a period of 363 years, were burnt by the Gauls, when they gained possession of the city, about 390 years before Christ. This destruction is much to be regretted, because we are compelled to rely, for a great portion of the early civil and military history of the Roman people, upon the uncertainty of tradition,

and are consequently unable to trace with accuracy, their gradual advances from barbarism to refinement—from humble origin to imperial grandeur.

Quintus Fabius Pictor, by the aid of such public records and chronicles as had escaped the destroying hand of barbarian violence, and such traditionary accounts as he was enabled to collect from the venerable fathers of the state, composed a history of Rome from the foundation of the city to the year 217 before Christ, embracing a period of 536 years. What were his peculiar merits as a writer, with regard to style and manner of composition, cannot now be determined, as his works are not extant—those which pass under his name being considered spurious. That he was regarded as a faithful historian, so far as his means of information enabled him to be so, may be safely inferred from the fact, that this is the work on which the magnificent superstructures of *Livy* and others are erected. To his industry in collecting and arranging in chronological order, the events of the first ages of the republic, are they chiefly indebted. He collected the materials which they afterwards polished and applied to their own use. The name, then, of *Fabius Pictor*, should occupy, if not a very splendid, at least a very honorable distinction, on the roll of fame.

From the time of *Fabius* until near the period of the extinction of Roman liberty, by the usurpation of Julius Cæsar, there was no historian of distinction. About 86 years before Christ, *Sallust*, who holds a very honorable rank among Roman historians, was born at Amiternum, a town of Italy, celebrated in the time of Æneas, for the assistance rendered by the inhabitants to Turnus, king of the Rutuli. He was educated at Rome, was a senator, and held the offices of questor and consul, but being depraved and licentious in his manners, he was degraded from the rank of senator, to which he was afterwards restored when he embraced the cause of Cæsar. Being made governor of Numidia, he did not scruple to use his power for the purpose of enriching himself, and so successful was he in his system of extortion, that on his return to Rome he built a magnificent house, which he adorned with all the elegance that wealth could purchase. The site is still pointed out, and is known by the name of the "Gardens of Sallust." *Sallust* composed a history of Rome more philosophic and more extensive in its researches, than that

of Fabius, but all we have left, are the histories of the conspiracy of Cataline and the Jugurthine war. In these works are exhibited a vigorous intellect, and a nervous and animated style, well calculated for historical composition, and he has given a faithful and impartial narrative of the events which form the main subjects of his work. He is, however, charged by learned critics, with the fault we have ascribed to Thucydides, namely, of putting long and labored harangues into the mouths of his principal characters, merely for the purpose of showing his great command of language, and his talent for that species of composition—these harangues, however, being used to embellish, do not impair the fidelity of the narrative, or affect his credibility as an historian. That he deserves the reputation of a faithful historian, appears from the fact, that when he was engaged in writing the history of the Punic wars, he not only examined the best authorities, but actually visited many places where engagements had taken place, that he might be accurate in his descriptions. Sallust married Terentia, the divorced wife of Cicero, which caused an irreconcilable quarrel between them, and will account for the manner in which Sallust passes over some circumstances in the life of Cicero that reflect the greatest honor upon him. Sallust died 35 years before Christ, in the fifty-first year of his age.

In the list of Roman historians is found the name of *Julius Cæsar*, renowned for his learning and eloquence, and that skill in politics and arms which overturned the Roman republic, and laid the foundation of the Roman empire. On the present occasion it is not our intention to speak of his military achievements, or to follow him in that victorious career by which he attained to sovereign power; we mean only to speak of him as a man of letters, as an historian, and the historian of wars in which he himself bore a prominent part. The times when, and circumstances under which, he composed his "Commentaries," are striking evidences of the energy of his mind and the vigor of his talents. It was not in the calm retirement of his closet, where he heard only the dulcet notes of peace, but amidst the tumult of war, the noise and bustle of camps, and the distraction of civil feuds. In this history he speaks of himself in the third person, and it is remarkable with what perfect coolness, self-possesion and impartiality he records his own actions. To this

valuable work, we are indebted for much of the information we possess, with respect to the early history of Britain, Gaul and Germany, and of the manners and customs of the inhabitants of the respective countries. The fame of Cæsar principally rests upon his warlike achievements—when he is spoken of, or alluded to, it is generally as a hero and a general, or as the subverter of Roman liberty, scarcely ever as a historian and accomplished orator—his civil virtues and talents are lost in the blaze of his glory as a military chieftain. Were he only known as the author of the "Commentaries," his name would deserve to be held in veneration, and indeed, so anxious was Cæsar for his literary fame, that when he was near being lost in the bay of Alexandria, he swam ashore with his commentaries in one hand and his arms in the other. Cæsar is said to have written a tragedy entitled Œdepus, founded upon events in the history of that royal family of Thebes, whose misfortunes have been the foundation of many tragedies from the time of Sophocles to the present. Somewhat associated with the name of Cæsar, is *Hirtius*, who is supposed to have written the 8th book of the "Wars of Gaul," and the history of the wars in Spain. After the death of Cæsar he was made consul, and was killed at the battle of Mutina.

Cornelius Nepos, another historian of these times, was born at Hostilia, a town situated on the Po. Attracted and encouraged by the munificence of Augustus to learned men, he removed to Rome, where he enjoyed the favor and shared the patronage of the emperor. He is said to have written several historical works, which are no longer extant. His lives of distinguished Greek and Roman generals and statesmen are still extant, and if they have not the popularity of the lives of Plutarch, they are at least equal for elegance of style and perspicuity of narration, and exhibit a faithful epitome of the principal transactions of the respective periods spoken of. A Roman writer, in the reign of Theodosius, A. D. 380, desirous of conciliating the favor of the emperor, endeavored to rob Nepos of the honor to which he was entitled, by publishing his "Lives." The cheat, however, was soon detected, and the property restored to its right owner.

One of the brightest ornaments of the times which we are reviewing, was *Titus Livy*. He was a native of Padua, and was born about 50 years before Christ and died 17 years after. His great work on Roman history, which has rendered his name im-

mortal in the annals of literature, commenced with the foundation of Rome, and was brought down to the death of Drusus, the grandson of Augustus. It was divided into decades, including one hundred and forty books, of which are extant the first, third, fourth and part of the fifth. The first decade comprises a period of four hundred and sixty years, the third eighteen years and the fourth twenty-three years. The second decade is entirely lost. To supply the chasm occasioned by the lost books, an epitome of Roman history has been compiled which is usually incorporated with the books of Livy. On this work he was employed upwards of twenty-two years, and as he was among the number of those literary men, who were peculiarly favored by Augustus, he enjoyed every opportunity of procuring authentic information, by consulting the public records. As a historian, *Livy* occupies a high rank, not only on account of the fidelity of his narrative, but for a style full of energy, clear, comprehensive and intelligible, and a majesty of expression superior to any of his contemporaries, and equalled by but few of his successors, in the same species of composition. Quintillian, the celebrated rhetorician and critic, entertained the highest opinion of Livy as a writer, and, speaking of his history, says, that his narrative is perfectly clear and singularly agreeable; that the harangues which he puts into the mouths of his principal speakers, are distinguished by a peculiar eloquence, and are in perfect accordance with the situations and circumstances, under which they are supposed to have been delivered, and that he excels in pathetic descriptions. With all his excellencies, he had his defects, the most grevious of which is, an apparent fondness for the marvellous, which induced him to insert accounts of omens and prodigies, at that time very frequent to the eye of superstition. Such accounts, although they may add to the solemnity of description, certainly diminish the dignity of history, and although they may be in accordance with the general belief of an ignorant people, they subject an author to the imputation of being too credulous and superstitious. The fame of Livy spread over the Roman empire, and so high was his reputation, that a citizen of Gades (now Cadiz,) visited Rome for the sole purpose of seeing him. St. Jerome, one of the christian fathers, alluding to this circumstance remarks, "that it was truly wonder-

ful, that a stranger should enter Rome in search of any thing but Rome itself."

Paterculus was a military tribune, and served several years in the armies of Tiberius. He wrote a history of Greece and Rome, of which only a fragment remains, embracing the period that intervened between the overthrow of Persius, king of Macedon, one hundred and sixty-eight years before Christ, by Plautus, a Roman general, in the reign of Tiberius. His work is considered as candid and impartial, until he comes to treat of those great events which overturned the republic, and established the throne of the Cæsars. He wrote under the reign of the tyrant Tiberius, and being anxious to secure the favor of the emperor, he depreciates the characters of Cicero and Pompey and elevates their rivals, whilst he flatters Tiberius and Sejanus in the style of the slave of a despot, whose very frown was to be dreaded.

The lot of *Tacitus* was cast in more favorable times. This most celebrated of Roman historians was born in the reign of Nero, and was the only son of a Roman knight, who had been governor of a province in Belgic Gaul. Of his early pursuits and education little is known; it is supposed, however, that he attended the school of Quintillian, a distinguished rhetorician, and received from him instructions in oratory, to fit himself for the bar, at that time a situation in which a man was least exposed to the malicious tyranny of the emperors. Quintillian was quickly struck with the extent of his genius and talents, and predicted that he "would deserve and acquire the admiration of posterity," which prophetic declaration has been remarkably fulfilled.

It was a fortunate circumstance for Tacitus and the world, that his infant years were passed under the reigns of the most cruel of the Roman emperors, and before his great talents began to display themselves. Under the reign of Vespasian, who patronised and protected literary merit, the foundation of his fortune was laid, and he peaceably pursued those studies, the fruits of which have rendered him so conspicuous. Tacitus passed through the several subordinate offices, until he attained the dignity of consul on the death of Virginius, in the reign of Nerva.

The works of Tacitus consist of his "Roman History," which begins with Galba and ends with Domitian; his "Annals," which

begin with the reign of Tiberius, and are brought down nearly to the conclusion of the reign of Nero, of which only two complete books, and parts of two others remain; his "Manners of the Germans," "Life of Agricola" and "Dialogues concerning oratory." At what time these works were published, is uncertain; but it is probable it was during the reigns of Nero and Trajan. It is a subject of much regret, that the historical works of so distinguished a writer should have come to us so incomplete, having suffered from the depredations of the ignorant barbarians who overturned the Roman empire, and who set no value upon any other quality than valor.

As an historian, he is faithful and impartial. He relates things as they were, in a style energetic and dignified, pure and classical, worthy the brightest period of Roman literature. He neither flattered the follies nor extenuated the vices of living great men, nor misrepresented the characters and achievements of the mighty dead. Strict justice to all appears to have been his governing principle, and the foundation on which he erected the fabric of his fame as an historian. His life of Agricola is a splendid specimen of biographical composition, which will not suffer by a comparison with the best production of Plutarch. In it he celebrates a virtuous Roman, and has erected a proud trophy to the memory of a man endeared to the people, as well by his amiable, gentle and virtuous character, as by his victories as a general; and who, no doubt, fell a victim to the jealousy and suspicion of Domitian. The fame of Tacitus is not confined to his celebrity as a writer; he also held a high rank as an orator. In the language of one of his biographers, "he could thunder and lighten in his discourse; open every source of the pathetic; draw the tear of compassion and mould an audience according to his will and pleasure." That he possessed these qualities in a high degree, we may justly conclude, from the eloquent and pathetic manner in which he has detailed some of the events of the reigns of Tiberius and Nero.

Quintus Curtius is supposed to have flourished in the reign of Vespasian. By some critics he is confounded with *Curtius Rufus*, who lived in the reign of Claudius, and atttained the dignity of consul. By those who have undertaken to rank the ancient historians according to their respective merits, he is placed in the first class, but whether deservedly, is very questionable.

His fame, however, rests upon his history of Alexander the Great; his other works, whatever they may have been, having been lost. This work was written in ten books, of which the two first, and part of the fifth and sixth, are lost, which have been supplied by a modern writer. It is the record of the achievements of the most extraordinary man of his age, who was as remarkable for the rapidity and extent of his conquests, as his boundless ambition. The difficulty of an enterprize presented but a feeble barrier to his progress; it only stimulated him the more in the prosecution of his designs. He was brave, liberal, and a patron of learning, but proud, haughty, and enamored of his regal dignity. "Give me kings for competitors," said he, "and I will enter the lists at Olympia." With all his virtues, he was sometimes cruel; as is evinced in the death of Calisthenes and Clitus; and being often intoxicated he was sometimes led into great extravagancies, as in setting fire to the palace of Persepolis. *Curtius*, in his style, is flowery and highly ornamented, exhibiting, perhaps, more of the decoration of the rhetorician, than the sober gravity of the historian. He is, nevertheless, entitled to the merit of having portrayed the character of his hero, without concealing his defects, or exaggerating his virtues.

Suetonius was the son of a Roman knight, and gained some distinction at the bar during the reign of Trajan. Having attracted the notice of Adrian, he made him his secretary, but having given some offence to the emperor, on account of his want of attention to the empress, he was deprived of his office and banished the court. Suetonius employed the period of his banishment in study, and composed several historical works and treatises on the games and spectacles of Greece, besides his "Lives of the Twelve Cæsars," which is the only production of his pen that has reached our times. This work is more biographical than historical; the great object of the writer seems to be, without regard to the order of events, to bring together whatever could reflect light upon the characters of those, whose lives he had undertaken to portray, omitting nothing in which they were concerned. He is, therefore, very exact and methodical in his details, and, judging from a comparison with contemporary authors, he has executed his work with fidelity.

Justin was an historian who flourished in the reign of Antoninus Pius, about one hundred and fifty years after Christ. He

wrote an abridgment of the history of *Trogus Pompeius*, who lived about 41 years before Christ. This work, comprised in forty-four books, embraces the history of the Assyrian, Grecian, Roman and Macedonian empires; the greater part of the work, however, is devoted to the empire of Philip and his successors. It is composed in a pure and elegant style, and is interspersed with many judicious reflections on the great and important events detailed, and to it we are indebted for many historical facts with regard to the Assyrian and Macedonian monarchies, not to be found in any other ancient writer now extant.

Arrian was born at Nicomedia, a city of Bythinia, and flourished under Adrian and the Antonines. He was a general as well as a philosopher and historian. Having been appointed prefect of Cappadocia, he carried on the war with success against the Alauni and Messagetæ. He was the author of several works, which have perished in common with a thousand other works of ancient literature; he is, however, advantageously known as the author of the history of the "Expeditions of Alexander the Great." This work is distinguished for that candor and faithful detail of events, that should always mark the historian, else histories will become mere fanciful romances, in which it will be impossible, after a lapse of time, to separate truth from fiction. An instance of this occurs in the Cyropedia of Xenophon, who has so blended truth with fiction, in order to set off the character of his favorite hero, that it is now a matter of doubt, whether it is to be considered as a true history of the life of Cyrus, or as a "moral romance," intended to exhibit the writer's opinion of what a monarch ought to be. It appears to have been the object of Arrian to present the character and exploits of his hero in their true light, divested of that high coloring which too often casts a false glare about the great men of the earth. He seems to have consulted the best authorities, particularly those who lived in the time of Alexander. On account of his style, he has been called another Xenophon. In philosophy, Arrian was a stoic; he collected and published the "Moral Manual," or "Enchiridion" of Epictetus, a celebrated philosopher of the school of Zeno, who flourished in the reign of Nero and the end of the reign of Adrian. The "Enchiridion," contains a faithful exposition of the stoic philosophy, as then taught.

Pausanias was another Roman historian who flourished about

the year A. D. 170. He wrote a history of Greece, in which he did not confine himself to military and political history; but entered into details with regard to the geography and antiquities of each state of Greece respectively. This history was comprised in ten books, and is still extant. It is regarded as a valuable addition to the history of the times of which he speaks, and the countries he describes.*

CHAPTER XI.

Literature of the Romans. Roman orators and miscellaneous writers: Hortensius, Cicero, Quintillian, Pliny the elder, Pliny the younger, Lucian, Plutarch.

As we remarked in a former chapter, the Greeks were early distinguished for their cultivation of the art of oratory, and for their displays of eloquence, bold, nervous and animated. The peculiar form of their government, particularly that of Athens, favored the improvement of this art, and as all laws, and every thing relating to public matters, were generally discussed in the assemblies of the people, where all had a voice, it became necessary that instructions in oratory should form a part of their system of education. Their orators had an unbounded influence, directing and controlling every public measure; indeed, no measure of importance was decided without them. We find, therefore, that schools were early established for the express purpose of teaching the rules necessary to form an accomplished orator. Throughout all Greece, (with the exception of Lacedemon, where "much speaking" was condemned,) the talent of speaking in public with grace and eloquence, was the most important, next to military talents, a citizen could possess, and was certain to lead him to distinction.

Oratory, as an art, was not cultivated in Rome at so early a period as in Greece; she had, however, her public speakers in the early ages of the republic, and in later times some of her

* Cæsar's Com.; Baker's Livy.; Adams' Rom. Ant.; Kennet's Rom. Ant.; Plutarch's Lives; Murphy's Tac.; Ferguson's Rome; Priestley's Lec.; Enf. Hist. of Phil.; Cours de Lit. par Laharpe, &c.

orators attained to a proud distinction, rivaling, if not surpassing the most celebrated among the Grecians. The relation of patron and client, which existed between the Patricians and Plebeians, afforded opportunities for the former to appear as advocates in the defence of the latter, and thus not only to cement more closely the union which existed, but also to make themselves known to the people in general, and strengthen their popularity. The places where these displays of forensic eloquence were exhibited, were generally the forum, before the tribunal of the prætor, the centumviri and other magistrates, and in the presence of the assembled people. These displays, however, were more the result of momentary excitement, than of studied preparation. In them they were confined by no rules; they were ignorant of the division of the oration into the exordium, the narration or explanation, and the peroration; and it was not until the Greek rhetoricians opened their schools, that they laid aside their natural and unstudied effusions, for the studied regularity and artificial manner of the schools.

The establishment of schools of rhetoric, soon gave a new impulse to oratory, and its rules became subjects of careful study and attention. As these establishments acquired celebrity, the most distinguished of the Roman youth entered themselves as disciples. Among the rest we find *Tiberius* and *Caius Gracchus*, who were distinguished as belonging to the family of the Scipios, and for their popular eloquence and seditious practices—practices which, notwithstanding their uncommon popularity with the people, conducted them to an untimely and violent end. Instead of dying gloriously on the field of battle, in a manner worthy of their great ancestors, they fell by the hand of the assassin. To bring to view the various persons who, after this period, distinguished themselves as orators, we should be led greatly beyond our limits; we shall, therefore, content ourselves with a brief notice of *Hortensius* and *Cicero*, two of those who were most celebrated, when oratory had attained its highest point of excellence in Rome.

Hortensius was born 113 years before Christ, and died at the age of sixty-three years. After having studied in the schools of rhetoric, he made his first appearance as a public speaker in the Roman forum, at the age of nineteen, and even at that early age acquired much fame. When *Cicero* entered on the arena of

forensic oratory, Hortensius was in the height of his fame, and no one had been daring enough to enter the lists as his competitor. Cicero, notwithstanding their rivalship, with that generosity that belongs to great minds, speaks of him as an orator in high terms, and says that he sustained his reputation to the end. Quintillian dissents from this opinion of Cicero, and considers his commendations as undeserved; it should, however, be borne in mind, when weighing these opposite opinions, that Cicero was the contemporary of Hortensius, and Quintillian flourished near a century after. We think, therefore, that more confidence ought to be placed upon the judgment of one who was contemporary, and had not only daily opportunities of witnessing his powers, but who had also felt their force. The manner of Hortensius, in his delivery, was censured by some as being better suited to the theatre than the tribunals of justice, and hence he received the appellation of *Dionysia*, after a celebrated dancer of the time. None of his orations are extant.

Marcus Tullius Cicero was born at Arpinum, a town of the Volsci, celebrated also as the birthplace of Marius. During his childhood he is said to have given strong testimony of superior talents, and anticipations of future promise. He studied philosophy and rhetoric under *Philo* of Laressa, a platonic philosopher, held in high esteem by the Romans. In his eighteenth year he commenced the study of law under *Mucius Scævola*, distinguished for his skill and knowledge in the civil law. He made his first appearance as a public speaker, at twenty-six years of age, in defence of Roscius, against the accusation of Scylla. Soon after, under the plea of ill health, but really through fear of Scylla, he left Rome and visited Athens, where he attended the several schools of philosophy. Leaving Athens, he visited Asia, where he availed himself of the instructions of Xenocles of Adramythum, a celebrated rhetorician, and at Rhodes studied under Apollonius, another rhetorician of distinction, who subsequently opened a school at Rome. Whilst under the instructions of Apollonius, it is related of Cicero, that his master not understanding the Latin language, desired him to declaim in Greek, which he done with so much effect, that Apollonius exclaimed, "As for you, Cicero, I praise and admire you; but I am concerned for the fate of Greece. She had nothing left her but the glory of her eloquence and erudition, and you

are carrying that too to Rome."* On his return to Rome, he applied himself with remarkable diligence to the study of oratory, and soon removed the prejudice that had been excited against him, that he was better fitted for the grave pursuits of philosophy, than the active duties of life. In the year of the city 691, he was chosen consul, and obtained immortal honor by his bold and successful opposition to the conspiracy of the dissolute and desperate Cataline, on which occasion the glorious title of "Father of his country" was conferred upon him, by the almost unanimous consent of the nation.

No one, except Demosthenes, has ever attained the high character of Cicero, as an accomplished orator. These two brilliant lights of ancient eloquence, are still held forth as beacons to guide the youthful candidates to the wished-for goal. The eloquence of Demosthenes was of a character different from that of Cicero. The orations of the former were delivered in the assemblies of the people; those of the latter in the senate house, in the presence of the conscript fathers, or in the forum, before the tribunals of justice. The eloquence of Demosthenes was directed to rouse and influence the passions of a whole people, on subjects in which the interests of a whole people were concerned, and in which all had a voice; that of Cicero was employed to convince the judgment of a limited number of individuals, who were not as likely to be swayed by appeals to the feelings, as a mixed multitude; therefore, the eloquence of Demosthenes was more declamatory and impassioned; that of Cicero more sober and discreet.

The fame of Cicero, as an orator, appears to be established on such solid foundation, that it will endure until

> ——— The great globe itself
> And all which it inherits shall dissolve.

His orations are all composed with much art, and according to rhetorical rules. In his exordiums he carefully attends to all the requisites for gaining the attention of his audience, and in his narrations his arguments are all arranged in such a masterly manner, that they could scarcely fail of producing the desired result. The powerful effect of his eloquence in no instance ap-

* Plut. Life of Cicero.

pears to us to have been more apparent, than in his orations against Cataline, when, although his situation was critical and required much circumspection and discretion, he seems to have laid aside the natural timidity of his character, and attacked the desperate conspirator with such boldness, that he was exposed to the daggers of two hired assassins of Cataline. This great man was involved in the proscription under the triumvirate, and was sacrificed to the vengeance of Anthony.

In addition to his "Orations," he wrote a treatise "On the nature of the Gods;" the "Tusculan questions;" "Dialogues on old age;" on "Moral offices;" "On laws," and several other works on "Rhetoric and oratory."

After the subversion of the republic, and the establishment of imperial rule, and particularly during the inglorious reigns of the tyrannical and blood-thirsty successors of Augustus, the schools of rhetoric declined, and oratory was confined to simple pleadings at the bar. Contemplating the fallen and degraded state of his favorite art, *Quintillian* attempted to revive its faded glory and restore it to its former splendor. *Quintillian* was a native of Spain; he was born in the reign of Claudius, and probably first visited the capital of the Roman empire in the reign of Nero. Talents like his, could not long remain concealed, and he soon acquired considerable reputation at the bar, and subsequently attained the honors of the consulship. To rescue the art of rhetoric from the degradation into which it had fallen in consequence of the despotic and arbitrary nature of the government, in the reign of Vespasian, Quintillian opened a school, in which rhetoric was taught according to certain rules, and, in addition to the tuition fees received from his pupils, he obtained a stated salary from the public treasury, the first ever granted to a public teacher; this circumstance serves to show in what estimation his learning and talents were held by the ruler of the empire. To this useful and honorable, though laborious, employment, he devoted twenty years, and, under his instructions we find many became distinguished public speakers; amongst others, the historian Tacitus and the younger Pliny. He retired from public life in the reign of Domitian; his leisure was still employed in literary studies, and in preparing, for the benefit of posterity, a treatise on the causes of the corruption of eloquence, and that celebrated system of rhetoric, which is still studied in

our institutions of learning, and is the most complete system of ancient rules on that subject now extant. The latter work is divided into twelve books. In it he points out with great care, that system of education he considers necessary to constitute an accomplished orator—not a mere declaimer, who thinks that eloquence consists in stringing together a number of high sounding words. His great object was to exhibit rules to form the eloquent and argumentative orator—the logician as well as rhetorician. To attain this object, he even begins with the infant in his cradle, and conducts him through a certain course of study, until his faculties are fully developed, and are capable of full and vigorous exercise in that field in which they are to be exerted. The youthful orators of the present day seem averse to established rules, and, giving way to a natural ardor, become too much addicted to that declamatory style which belongs not to true oratory; high sounding epithets, a flowing diction, and beautifully rounded periods, appear to strike their imaginations with more force, than that correctness of arrangement, energy and boldness of style and closeness of reasoning, recommended by Quintillian. To such the works of Quintillian will be found highly useful; and were they studied with more care, after the youthful orator has left the walls of a college, we would not witness so many violations of rhetorical rules, and declamation would soon give place to a chaste and manly style of oratory. "Genius," says the Abbé Maury, "needs to be guided in its progress, and the curb which preserves it from wandering, restrains by salutary checks, and renders it the greatest service. It is thus that genius becomes strengthened and increased, when it proceeds under the guidance of reason and judgment." The close of Quintillian's life was embittered by the loss of his wife and his two sons, and notwithstanding imperial favor and the success of his writings, he was reduced to indigence, from which he was relieved by the younger Pliny. He died A. D. 95.

In the whole catalogue of literary men among the ancients, we know none more worthy of remembrance than the elder and younger Pliny. *Pliny the elder* was born at Verona, in the reign of Tiberius A. D. 23. Having distinguished himself as a soldier, he was made governor of Spain, the duties of which he faithfully and diligently discharged. He was remarkable for his studious habits, even when engaged in the turmoils and

perplexities of public business. So earnestly was he devoted to the acquisition of knowledge, that even at his meals one of his servants read to him, and when in the bath, his active mind dictated to an amanuensis. Pliny was particularly devoted to the study and investigation of subjects of natural history, and to his love for natural science he fell a victim. Being at Misenum A. D. 79, where he commanded a fleet, he was suddenly surprised by a violent eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Impelled by curiosity to examine more nearly this great phenomenon, he immediately set sail for the mountain, and landing on the coast, he found it deserted by the inhabitants; he determined, however, to remain during the night, the better to observe the eruption. As the eruption increased, and the fire approached where he was, he endeavored to make his escape, but was unfortunately suffocated by the thick vapor that surrounded him. At the time of his death, he was in the fifty-sixth year of his age. Of the various works of which he was the author, none remain but his works on natural history, in thirty-seven books. It treats of the various phenomena of the natural world, of earthquakes, eclipses, meteors, the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, and is highly valuable for the innumerable facts it contains, and as showing the state of natural science at the time in which he lived—a science which has obtained, by the diligent labors and investigations of modern naturalists, a high rank in some of our seats of learning, and which ought to be taught in all.

The *Younger Pliny* was the nephew of Pliny the Elder, and was born at Como, in the reign of Nero, A. D. 62. He was the contemporary and intimate friend of the historian Tacitus, and with him attended the lectures of Quintillian on rhetoric and oratory. In the reign of Domitian, he filled the several offices of questor, tribune of the people and prætor. Under Trajan he was appointed pro-consul of Bithynia, in which situation he rendered essential service to the cause of christianity, by putting a stop to the persecution of the christians, declaring to the emperor, that they were a meek and inoffensive set of men, of pure and innocent morals, who bound themselves by solemn oaths to abstain from vice. Attached, from policy or conviction, to the pagan worship, Pliny regarded the christians as mistaken enthusiasts, who would be sooner converted from what he considered the "error of their ways," by gentle than by violent means.

Influenced by such feelings, and by a generous spirit of humanity, he used his utmost efforts to turn aside the arrows of persecution, and stay the effusion of christian blood, not only by his representations to the emperor, but by virtue of his office of proconsul. For his benevolent and successful exertions, his name deserves to be held in grateful remembrance by the christian world. Pliny wrote the history of his own times, which is lost; he is also said to have been a poet, but of his poetical talents we have no specimens by which to form a judgment. Of all his writings, nothing is at present extant but his panegyric on the emperor Trajan and his letters, in ten books. Few works of the same description deserve higher commendations than his epistles; they are perfect models of that species of composition, and are remarkable for that easy and familiar, yet graceful style, which form the charm of epistolary writing. Besides their merit, regarded merely in a literary point of view, they contain many curious and interesting facts, concerning the history of the times, and anecdotes of individuals who have made prominent figures in Roman history. The English reader is under many obligations to *Melemoth* for his elegant and spirited translation of these celebrated letters. *Pliny* died in the 52d year of his age, A. D. 113.

Lucian was a celebrated writer who flourished in the reign of the *Antonines*, and was a native of Samosata, a town of Syria, near the Euphrates. Like many others who have risen to distinction, as warriors, statesmen and men of letters, he was born of parents of humble rank in society and in narrow circumstances. To his very poverty may be attributed the distinction he attained in the learned world. Had the coffers of his father overflowed with wealth, he might have rioted in pleasure, and his talents would probably have remained concealed for want of some inducement to call them into exercise. Early in life, however, disliking the profession for which his father designed him, he was thrown upon the world with nothing but his own genius and talents to conduct him through its various difficulties. His peculiar powers being thus called into action, by a careful and diligent cultivation, they ultimately conducted him to honor and fame. It is thus at the present day; the greater number of those who are distinguished in public life, when the road to preferment is not obstructed by privileged classes, are those who have

risen from obscurity, and have made their way by the mere force of their own talents. Lucian was, early in life, bound to one of his uncles, who was a statuary; but, having no taste for the profession, or being unfortunate in his first attempts in the art, he left his uncle, and determined to turn his attention to some other employment more consonant with the bent of his genius. In those times, dreams and omens had a great effect upon the most powerful as well as the weakest minds—the wise as well as the ignorant, were influenced by them, although in different degrees. Lucian having had a dream, in which a figure representing learning appeared before him, in an enouraging attitude, and beckoned him to approach the temple of fame, he removed to Antioch, where he engaged with some success in the profession of an advocate; but growing tired of the profession, he determined to pursue the study of rhetoric and philosophy, and afterwards give instructions in the former as he travelled through Gaul, Spain and Greece. As a philosopher, his creed seems to have been made up of all the existing sects, which he studied and examined with the care of one who was in search of information.

Lucian enjoyed the peculiar favor of *Marcus Aurelius*, by whom he was appointed register to the Roman governor of Egypt, an office of honor and profit. The friendship and protection of such a man as Aurelius, is an evidence of the high estimation in which he was held. The works of Lucian are written in the Attic, the purest of the Grecian dialects, and are not only composed in a style easy, elegant and animated, but abound in that attic salt, which gives so keen an edge to his satires. Many of the productions of Lucian are entirely lost; the greater part of those extant consist of dialogues. He had a peculiar turn of mind for satire, which led him to censure unjustly, some of the most illustrious men of whom antiquity can boast. Even the great Socrates did not escape the malice of his pen, nor did the pure doctrines of christianity, which were then making considerable progress, and were soon to become the religion of the empire. He appears to have made but few inquiries on the subject of christianity, and to have entirely mistaken the nature and tendency of that religion which has since blessed and enlightened millions of the human race, and will continue in its onward march, until the whole world shall be blessed b

benignant influence. Lucian died in the ninetieth year of his age, A. D. 180. The story of his being torn to pieces by dogs, in consequence of his ridiculing the christian religion, is one of those ridiculous fables invented in after times of ignorance and superstition, for the purpose of casting an odium upon his character.

The name of *Plutarch* is familiar to all on account of his lives of illustrious men of antiquity. He was a native of Cheronea, in Bœotia, a country celebrated for the dulness of its inhabitants, yet giving birth to Hesiod, Pindar and Plutarch, three names, without mentioning others, not only sufficient to redeem the character of any country, but to place it high upon the list of fame. Plutarch flourished from the time of Nero to that of Adrian. He was instructed in philosophy by Ammonius, a teacher of celebrity at Delphi. In search of knowledge, he afterwards travelled into Egypt, and trod the classic ground of Greece. He subsequently opened a school at Rome, which was much frequented, in consequence of the reputation he had even then obtained. At Rome he was patronised by the emperor Trajan, who conferred upon him the dignity of consul, and appointed him governor of Illyricum. Notwithstanding his civil occupations, he still found leisure to devote to the pursuits of literature and the composition of works on various subjects. On the death of Trajan, he returned to his native place, where he passed the remainder of his days, closely applying himself to study, and enjoying the respect and esteem of his fellow-citizens. He died about the year A. D. 130, at an advanced age.

Many of the writings of Plutarch have perished. The most valuable of those extant, and those upon which his fame rests, are his lives of illustrious men, still admired as models of biographical composition. In his "Lives," it appears to have been his object, not to surround his heroes with a false glare, thus concealing the defects of their character, but to exhibit them in their true light, whether as statesmen, warriors or philosophers. His historical facts are detailed with fidelity and precision, and in his delineation of character he is remarkably impartial, particularly when he compares the heroes of Greece and Rome. Although the nice and observing eye of criticism, may observe a leaning in favor of the Grecian, yet it is evident that the great object of the writer is, to execute what he has undertaken, with

an impartial hand, however the prejudices of country might bias his judgment.*

CHAPTER XII.

Rise and progress of philosophy at Rome, to the death of Marcus Aurelius.

Although renowned and illustrious in the civil and military annals of the world, and prolific in poets, historians and orators, who have shed a brilliant light upon her history, Rome did not produce a single philosopher, who was conspicuous for boldness and originality, in the wide field of philosophic research and speculation. She had none who could come in competition with that host of eminent men, who, in the porticos, groves and gardens of Athens, investigated and explained the wonderful works of nature, and taught a sublime system of morals, to crowds of attentive and admiring disciples. It is true, that some writers, in their zeal to advance the Roman character in all things, as well in science as in arms, have carried back the history of philosophy to the time of *Numa*, and have not only placed him in the list of philosophers, but have considered him as the first Roman entitled to this distinguished appellation. What his claims may have been, and what were his peculiar merits, it is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain, as all his works, which could have thrown any light upon the subject, were buried with him, and have consequently perished. Without attempting to detract from the fame of Numa, we are inclined to the belief, that his doctrines are not much superior to those of many other benefactors of the human family, unless his talents, as a legislator, and acquirements in civil polity, presuppose an acquaintance with the principles of philosophy. His claims to the character of a legislator, whose object was to improve the condition of his subjects, are not so equivocal; they are more clearly and comprehensively displayed in the wise regulations

* Plut. Lives; Mid. Cic.; Quin. Ins.; Melmoth's Pliny; Lem. Class. Dic.; Edin. Ency; Abbé Mauy on Elo.; Fenelon dia on Ora.; Cours de Lit. par Laharpe, &c.

and excellent institutions he adopted for the government of a people, rude and barbarous, and which were delivered with the imposing circumstances and powerful effect, that attend the promulgation of laws sanctioned by a divinity. These laws and regulations, we consider rather as the result of the reflections of a sound and vigorous mind, strictly disciplined, than of philosophical speculation and research.

The rise of philosophy at Rome, may be more correctly dated from about the year 156 before Christ, when *Carneades*, the Academic, *Diogenes* the Stoic, and *Critolaus*, the Peripatetic, visited the city, and communicated to the Roman youth a taste for philosophical studies and pursuits, and an earnest desire to be instructed in Grecian literature, of which they were then almost entirely ignorant. Whatever system of philosophy had been taught by Numa, had long been forgotten, and the minds of men were, therefore, more disposed to receive the new doctrines, and more likely to be impressed by them. Their wisdom and eloquence soon gained their attention and disciples, notwithstanding the opposition of Cato the censor, who was so excited against them, as to procure a decree of the senate, which caused their removal from Rome, and a few years after, the censors, in the plenitude of their power and authority, issued an edict, setting forth, that "whereas certain men have instituted a new kind of learning, and opened schools in which young men trifle away their time, day after day, we, judging this innovation to be inconsistent with the purpose for which our ancestors established schools, contrary to ancient custom, and injurious to our youth, do hereby warn both those who keep those schools, and those who frequent them, that they are herein acting contrary to our pleasure." This edict was rigorously enforced and the schools shut, and having accomplished the immediate design of its enactment, that of closing the schools then in existence, it lay dormant for many years after, but was again revived about 91 years before Christ, when other schools of rhetoric and philosophy were about to be opened. Notwithstanding the decrees of the censors, philosophy gained some strength; some of the most distinguished of the Roman youth embraced the new doctrines and cultivated them with an assiduity becoming so important an object, as the improvement of their mental powers. Among those who were particularly distinguished for their ardor in the pur-

suit of knowledge, were Scipio Africanus, Lelius, Furius, Quintius Tubero, a nephew of Scipio, and the consul Lucullus. They did not attach themselves to any particular sect, but examined and studied with care the systems of all, so that they made the principles and doctrines of each, subservient to their subsequent advancement in civil and military life. Lucullus, in order to promote a taste for learning and philosophy, made a large collection of valuable books, and established schools, to which he invited learned men of whatever sect, and he himself often appeared among them, engaging in conversation on subjects of literature and science. When Greece was finally conquered by the Roman arms, Rome opened her gates to receive within her walls, Grecian professors of wisdom and eloquence; all the prejudices which before existed, in a few years entirely vanished, and philosophers and rhetoricians, who were but lately proscribed, were held in honor and liberally rewarded.

It is worthy of remark, and only to be attributed to the disposition and character of the Roman people, which encouraged nothing but a warlike spirit, that the doctrines of the Pythagorean school, although first established in Italy, did not extend beyond that part of it called *Græcia Magna*, until the final conquest of Greece, five hundred years after the time of Pythagoras. It was then introduced into Rome, and shared, for a time, with the philosophers of the Ionic school, the countenance and patronage of the Roman people. The most distinguished Roman disciple of this mysterious school was *Publius Nigidius*, who was contemporary with Cicero, and who is described as an acute and penetrating inquirer into the operations of nature. *Nigidius* having attached himself to the cause of Pompey, when Cæsar assumed the supreme power, was banished from Rome, and the doctrines of Pythagoras having lost their chief support, fell into disrepute.

In the variety of opposing and conflicting opinions of the different sects, whose disciples were heard in Rome, the *Platonic* or *Academic*, had the greatest number of votaries, owing perhaps, as well to the influence of *Carneades*, one of its most illustrious ornaments, and the impressions made by his instructions, as to the sublime and fascinating character of the doctrines themselves, which laid open new views of nature, and inculcated the most important principles in morals. To this school the celebrated *Cicero* was chiefly attached, although he made himself ac-

quainted with the tenets of each, drawing upon the rich store of information thus obtained, for some of the materials employed in his powerful displays of eloquence, to which senates listened with wonder and delight, and which, after a lapse of eighteen hundred years, continue to improve and instruct mankind.

The stoic sect found also many disciples. In *Cato of Utica*, whose life was an exemplar of the doctrines he professed, it possessed a distinguished advocate. This celebrated man was a descendant of Cato the censor, and exhibited throughout his whole life an example of the most rigid virtue, inflexible integrity and determination of purpose, which nothing could shake. He was unmoved and inflexible at the head of his cohorts and in the field of battle, as in the Roman senate—in the midst of his little senate of Utica, while deliberating upon measures for the public good in a trying time of the republic, as when, surrounded by his friends, he gave the fatal blow that deprived himself of life, and his country of a brilliant ornament, at the same time exhibiting a striking instance of the unsubdued firmness of a noble mind.

The Peripatetic philosophy, or that of which Aristotle was the founder, was introduced into Rome in the time of Scylla, who, when the city of Athens fell into his hands, purchased the writings of Aristotle and Theophrastus, which were found in the possession of some of their descendants and carried them to Rome. Being much defaced and some parts entirely destroyed, Scylla placed them in the hands of Tyrannis, a celebrated grammarian and critic, who transcribed the greater part, himself and some of his friends supplying the deficiencies. Thus we have the works of Aristotle imperfect and mutilated, and disfigured by interpolations. This system found many admirers and advocates, among whom were *Crassus*, who employed a philosopher of his school as a preceptor, and *Cicero*, notwithstanding his predilection for that of Plato.

The Epicurean philosophy met with considerable opposition, in consequence of the irregularity of some of its followers, whose deviations from the path of rectitude were attributed to the errors and defects of the system itself. It was violently assailed by the followers of Zeno, to whose sterner maxims it was opposed, by giving greater license to the inclinations and propensities of mankind. Cicero also opposed it with great vehemence, and

took every opportunity of inveighing, not only against the principles of the sect, but against the character of Epicurus himself. Montesquieu says, that the introduction of the philosophy of Epicurus, was one great cause of the corruption of the Roman people, and the downfall of the republic.* This sect has, however, found ingenious, if not able, defenders, in modern times, who represent its founder as no less the friend of strict virtue and rational pleasure, than the enemy of vice and those low and groveling passions, that disgrace our nature.† Notwithstanding the violent opposition of the Stoics, backed by the weight and influence of Cicero, it found many powerful friends among the most respectable characters of Rome, particularly in the celebrated poet Lucretius, of whom we have already spoken, and Atticus, the bosom friend of Cicero, to whom many of his epistles are addressed, and who, to make himself better acquainted with the doctrines of the sect, visited Athens, and studied under Phidius, and Zeno the Sidonian.

Having thus briefly sketched the state of philosophy as it existed at Rome, before the introduction of christianity, we will offer a few remarks upon that great event, and then bring to view some of those philosophers of different sects, both pagan and christian, who made themselves conspicuous by their wisdom and learning.

Of all the events recorded in history which have occurred since the creation of the world, the most wonderful, interesting and important, is the introduction of christianity. The changes and revolutions which taken place in the political world, the rise and fall of empires, are interesting and important events, involving as they do, the happiness and prosperity of nations; but how little do all the mighty schemes of politicians for national aggrandisement appear, when compared with the stupendous revolution produced in the moral world, by the introduction and promulgation of the christian religion. Scarcely had its author offered himself and cemented with his blood, the religion he presented to mankind, when his favored disciples, clothed in the sacred mantle of his righteousness, and invested with full powers as ambassadors of God, began to propogate his doctrines among the gentile nations, who were then the slaves of a super-

* Gran. et Dec. des Rom. ch. 10. † See Miss Wright's "Few days in Athens."

stitious idolatry, and to undermine the deeprooted prejudices, which the influence of many centuries had established. The edifices which heathen superstition had erected for the worship of false gods, were converted into temples, wherein the supplications of repentant and contrite hearts, were offered upon altars consecrated to the service of the one true God.

Besides the wonderful effect wrought in the moral and religious world, the promulgation of christianity, by pointing to new objects, introduced new modes of thinking, and suggested new subjects for discussion and investigation. It presented a much more extensive field for speculation, and a much wider range for thought, and for the exercise of those reasoning faculties with which man is so liberally endowed, and which are given him to be employed not for his own exclusive benefit, but for the good of the whole human family. At the important period of which we are speaking, the schools of philosophy exercised a very great influence over the minds of men, and the doctrines of some by enlightening the understandings of their disciples, prepared them, in some degree, to the reception of the principles of the christian faith. Some of the ancient systems, particularly that of Plato, inculcated opinions in morals remarkable for sublimity, and not a few approached very nearly to some of the great and fundamental doctrines taught by the apostolic teachers. It was for this reason, that the philosophy of Plato, not only became a favorite system among the early christians, but many of the fathers incorporated the opinions of that philosopher with the doctrines of divine truth, thus, indeed, corrupting the purity of the christian faith, and giving to their pagan adversaries the opportunity of asserting, that Christ was indebted for his doctrines to the heathen philosophers and not to divine inspiration; that his principles were the "enticing words of man's wisdom—the philosophy and vain deceit after the traditions of men," not the "demonstration of the spirit." The corruptions which thus crept into the system through ignorance, have not only caused much trouble to divines and theologians in after-times to explain away, but have been productive of many of the unfortunate disputes which have divided, and still continue to divide, the christian church.

Jesus Christ, as the founder of the christian system of religion, was regarded, even by his enemies, as one gifted with great

powers of intellect, to which most of the heathen writers of the time bear testimony. He was ranked among philosophers, and although his doctrines were different from those to which the world had been accustomed, he held no inconsiderable rank, as one to whom mankind were greatly indebted for many important discoveries—as one who had rendered many things perfectly intelligible, which before were dark, mysterious and impenetrable. The mystery which enshrouded many of the operations of nature was removed, and what was inexplicable, according to the previous conceptions of men, when viewed by the brilliant light of christianity, was rendered perfectly clear. Many of the christian fathers, when addressing the heathens, spoke of christianity as the true and evangelical system of *philosophy*, as distinguished from the philosophy of the pagan world, thus ingeniously turning their attention towards it, without alarming their prejudices. By this means they were gradually initiated into a knowledge of the great scheme of Divine Providence, for the pardon and redemption of man, and were assured of the resurrection of the body at the last day, as well as of that important and consoling truth, that death is "the suspension, not the extinction of our being"—that the soul does not perish, but after death will pass into another world and there bloom in eternal spring—great and important truths which were but dimly seen, and not at all understood, by the lofty and aspiring minds of Socrates, Plato or Aristotle.

Among the philosophers of the different schools we have mentioned, *Lucius Seneca* holds a distinguished place. Like Quintilian he was born at Corduba (now Cordova,) in Spain, about fifteen years before the death of Augustus, and was taken to Rome while yet a child. His father, *Marcus Seneca*, had considerable reputation as an orator, and the first studies of Lucius were directed to the same object. His genius, however, pointed in a different direction, and he became a disciple of Attalus, a philosopher of the stoic school, under whose instructions he continued until the doctrines of Zeno had taken deep root. Although a stoic in principle, he examined with care the doctrines of other sects, and the result of his examination was, a confirmation of the stoical doctrines. The mind of Seneca was well stored with the learning of the times, and although the study of oratory occupied but a small portion of his time, he was far from

being a contemptible orator. The first public office with which he was invested, was that of questor, after which he rose to some distinction in the court of Claudius, but was soon banished, through the influence of the infamous Messalina, the wife of Claudius, to the island of Corsica, where he continued eight years. In this retirement he devoted himself to the study of philosophy, and, as appears from a letter to his mother, he was "as cheerful and happy as in the days of his prosperity." Influenced by his second wife Agrippina, Claudius recalled Seneca from banishment, invested him with the office of pretor, and entrusted him with the education of Nero. In this task he was associated with Burrhus. By endeavoring to inculcate upon his pupil just and equitable sentiments, and instructing him in the precepts of wisdom and virtue, they hoped to fit him for the head of a great empire. As long as Burrhus lived, Nero was restrained from the indulgence of those propensities and intemperate passions, which afterwards broke out with so much violence. After Nero's accession to the throne, Seneca enjoyed his favor, until envy and jealousy involved him in the conspiracy of Piso, and Nero embraced this opportunity of ridding himself of his preceptor, by ordering him to destroy himself, which event occurred A. D. 65, in the 53d year of his age.

The writings of Seneca, which have been handed down to us, are principally on subjects of philosophy and morality; and consist of one hundred and twenty-four epistles, and several treatises on a variety of subjects. His writings have been censured by Quintillian, and other critics who have followed him, as corrupt and inelegant in their style. They are, however, highly valued at the present day for their excellent moral precepts, notwithstanding they are the productions of a heathen philosopher. Seneca is also supposed to have written several tragedies, none of which are now extant.

The philosophy of the stoics appears to have made greater progress and secured more disciples, in the days of the empire, than any other sect. It acquired a great degree of credit in consequence of the heroic conduct of many persons of both sexes who embraced its doctrines, and who supported by them in time of need, bravely encountered the terrors of death, to which they had been doomed by sanguinary tyrants, who delighted in the torrents of blood, they caused to be shed. Besides Seneca,

Rome could boast of several distinguished philosophers of this school, who flourished before the schools of heathen philosophy were swallowed up by the christian schools; among them we find the celebrated *Epictetus*, and the illustrious *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*.

Epictetus was a Phrygian by birth, and was sold as a slave to Epaphroditus, one of Nero's domestics. He flourished from the time of Nero to the latter end of the reign of Adrian. He is said to have been an "acute and judicious observer of manners. His eloquence was simple, majestic, nervous and penetrating. His doctrines inculcated the purest morals, and his life was an admirable pattern of sobriety, magnanimity and the most rigid virtue." Having fallen under the displeasure of Domitian, he was banished from Italy and fixed his residence at Nicopolis, where he delivered the precepts of his philosophy. They were so much admired by his disciples, that they committed them to writing, and it is to this circumstance the world is indebted for his "Enchiridion," or "Moral Manual," collected by Arrian, the historian of Alexander the Great.

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus was the successor of *Antoninus Pius*, and was no less distinguished for his learning and virtue, than his imperial dignity. He early studied the stoic philosophy under Sextus Junius, and, at twelve years of age, appeared in the habit of a philosopher, and practised all the austerities of the stoic school. On the death of Antoninus Pius, being advanced to the empire, he governed with so much clemency and justice, that he obtained the general love of his subjects. Indefatigable in his attention to the duties of his high station, he still found leisure to devote to the pursuits of philosophy. Throughout his whole life, he is said to have exhibited a shining example of that equanimity of temper, it was the object of the stoic philosophy to produce in its disciples. His "Meditations" are still extant, and are regarded as valuable remains of that celebrated system of philosophy to which he was attached.*

* Enfield's Hist. of Phil.; Meditations of Mar. Aure.

CHAPTER XIII.

History of literature from the accession of Commodus to the reign of Constantine, including pagan and christian writers.

Between the accession of Commodus and that of Constantine, who removed the seat of empire from Rome to Byzantium, and thus contributed to the prostration of Roman glory, intervened a period of one hundred and twenty-six years. So unsettled were the affairs of the empire, that in this short interval no less than twenty-one princes were elevated to the dangerous height of the imperial throne, and, although a few of this number were able men, they had too much to occupy their attention in the preservation of their own power, to permit much time to be devoted to the concerns of literature. So lost were the Roman people to the principles of virtue—so little remained of their ancient generous spirit to animate their bosoms—so entirely were they ruled by the army and the pretorian guards, that they submitted their necks to the yoke, and the chains that tyranny had forged for them, without daring to raise their voices or their arms against such degradation. The conscript fathers, whose decrees were once obeyed over almost the whole of the known world, were now mere instruments—the obedient slaves of a tyrant's will. The noble spirit which once animated a Roman senate, and induced them to submit their necks to the swords of the Gauls, rather than become their slaves, had long since departed. When we look back to the origin of the republic, and follow its progress from the most humble beginning to the very pinnacle of renown—when we contemplate the Roman people in the splendor of their fame, the conquerors and arbiters of the world, in the full enjoyment of their civil and political liberty, the encouragers and promoters of science, literature and the arts—it becomes a matter of astonishment how such a people could submit to the rule of such profligate and contemptible tyrants as Commodus, Caracalla and Heliogabalus. But nations, as well as individuals, have their seasons of prosperity and decline; and the ways of God are so insorutible, that what appears to our limited view as strange and even unjust, may be

designed for the wisest and best of ends. Could a sense of former glory, or the heroic achievements of their fathers, have stimulated to deeds of heroism and acts of generous valor, under such princes as Alexander, Aurelian and Tacitus, who were virtuous, just and merciful, they might have shaken off the yoke of tyranny and oppression, and regained a portion of their former fame.

Under this state of the Roman government, it is not to be expected that general literature and science would flourish and extend their branches abroad. The tree of science and literature best flourishes by the side of the tree of liberty; the soil which supports the one, furnishes the best nutriment to support the other. About this time, christianity had made considerable progress, and had taken hold upon the hearts and affections of many of the people. Fears were entertained by the adherents of the ancient religion, that their system would be overturned; hence, literature assumed a new form, and, instead of investigating the wonders of nature, singing the praises of gods and heroes in measured verse, or recording the events of the times, in the free, manly and energetic style of Tacitus, the pen was employed in unprofitable contests between the christians and pagans. The one party were seeking to uphold the ancient religion, by all the arguments philosophy could devise or ingenuity invent, and appealing to long established usages; the other to overturn the altars of pagan superstition—the one endeavoring to support the philosophy of the schools and the system of morals they taught; the other to establish the more sublime system of the son of God. The contest was conducted on both sides, with much warmth and zeal, and no small degree of acrimony. On the side of polytheism, the most distinguished advocate, and, in truth, the only one whose objections and arguments against the christian religion, seem to have deserved a serious refutation, was *Celsus*, a philosopher who, having studied all the different systems of philosophy, adopted that of Epicurus.

Celsus was born about the close of the reign of Adrian. The place of his birth, and the history of his early life, are alike involved in obscurity, and his writings, celebrated as they were in his time, are lost, except so much of his work against christianity as is preserved in the work of Origen, who, having set forth his principal arguments and objections, triumphantly and

successfully refutes them. *Celsus* was familiarly acquainted with the doctrines of the various schools of philosophy, and was, no doubt, well versed in the arts of controversy. His work too, must have been at least ingeniously composed, or its refutation would not have engaged the pen of *Origen*, who was a distinguished father of the church, and a zealous and intrepid defender of what he considered the truths of the gospel dispensation. To the character and conduct of the primitive christians, Celsus, notwithstanding his prejudices, and even hatred, bears honorable testimony, acknowledging that amongst them, were many who were temperate, modest, virtuous and regular in their lives. The literary labors of Celsus were not confined to his controversies with the christian fathers; he was the author of some other works, of which, however, none are at present extant.

About this time a new sect of philosophy arose, whose tenets, in consequence of the apparent candor with which they were promulgated, spread with rapidity throughout the empire. This sect had its origin at Alexandria in Egypt, then the seat of learning. Its founders collected from different sects such doctrines as they thought conformable to truth, and adopted most of the leading doctrines taught by Plato and his followers, and hence assumed the name of *Platonics;* they were also called *Eclectics*, from the circumstance of their selecting and adopting such of the doctrines of different sects as they approved.

The founder of this sect was *Potamo*, a disciple of the school of Plato, who flourished, as is supposed by some, under Augustus, by others towards the close of the second century. This system of philosophy, although compounded of the doctrines of the Egyptian, Platonic, Pythagorean and other sects, intermixed with the doctrines of Christ and the Persian Zoroaster, found many advocates among the Alexandrian christians, who were desirous of retaining the title and habit of philosophers, with their character as christians. After Potamo, the eclectic school was supported by *Ammonius*, who considered the ancient philosophy of the east, as preserved by Plato, to be the primitive standard of all religions, and to restore it to its original purity was the great design of Jesus Christ upon earth. Ammonius was born of christian parents, and was early instructed in the learning of the Alexandrian schools. When he arrived to man's estate, he apostatized from the faith in which he had been edu

cated, at least so far as to adopt the general principles of philosophy taught by Potamo, making, however, such additions and alterations as conformed with his own ideas. Although educated in the christian faith, his leading object seems to have been to obstruct the progress of christianity by combining the principal tenets of the pagan and christian schools, and thus to bring about a coalition of all the philosophical sects, and all the different systems of religion that prevailed in the world. To reconcile the various systems of religion, and particularly the christian, with his own, he turned into a mere allegory the whole history of the gods, and maintained that those beings whom the priests and people dignified with this title, were no more than celestial ministers, to whom a certain kind of worship was due; but a worship inferior to that which was to be reserved for the Supreme Deity. He acknowledged Christ to be a most excellent man, the friend of God, the admirable *theurge;* he denied, however, that Jesus designed to abolish entirely, the worship of demons, and of the other ministers of divine Providence; and affirmed, on the contrary, that his only intention was, to purify the ancient religion, and that his followers had manifestly corrupted the doctrines of their divine master.* This combination of heathen and christian philosophy, was the cause of innumerable corruptions which subsequently flowed into the channel of the christian church, impairing the beautiful simplicity of its doctrines, and, in the dark ages which followed the decline of learning, produced a superstition as blind, as ever disgraced the altars and temples of paganism. Too many of those who are called fathers of the church, and whose opinions were reverenced as divine, were educated in the principles of the eclectic school—this mixture of truth and falsehood. After the revival of learning, the eclectic philosophy was attempted to be revived by *Jerome Cardan*, a physician of Pavia, who is represented to have been a wonderful compound of wisdom and folly, and it afterwards found advocates in the celebrated Francis Bacon, Campanella, Hobbes, Des Cartes, Leibnitz and others.

After this brief notice of a system of philosophy, which was destined to have a considerable influence upon the state of religion and science, we will return to the most celebrated writers

* Mosheim's Ecc. His. vol. 1.

of that period, who were all more or less tinctured with its principles. *Tertullian* was a native of Carthage, and was the contemporary and opponent of Celsus. After he renounced the errors of paganism and embraced christianity, like Saul of Tarsus, he became one of its zealous advocates. Although he was not brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, he was instructed in the learning of the times, and was intimately acquainted with the doctrines and opinions of the different sects of Grecian philosophy. As many christians, who had been educated in pagan schools, mingled the doctrines of philosophy with the doctrines of the church, he attributed most of the heresies which had then crept into its bosom, to their influence, and styles philosophers the "patriarchs of heretics." Tertullian possessed a lively and vivid imagination, rather than a strong and discriminating mind, and, in his zeal against what he esteemed a vain philosophy, he adopted and gave currency to opinions almost as much at war with the sober dictates of reason, as the wildest theories of those against whose doctrines and opinions he was contending. Of this we might cite many instances, did our limits permit. The most celebrated of his works is his "Apology for the Christians," in which he refutes the various calumnies that were circulated against them.

About this time flourished *Clemens Alexandrinus*. He received his education in the schools of Alexandria. He had various preceptors, by whom he was initiated into all the learning of the east, as well as the philosophy and literature of the Greeks. Although celebrated as a christian father, and one of the supporters of the church in perilous times, in consequence of blending the tenets of the heathen philosophers, with the christian doctrines in his writings, he was, in many respects, injurious to the cause he supported; and particularly in after ages, when the opinions of the primitive fathers were regarded as divine, and of equal authority with the scriptures themselves. Like others, he transferred many of the opinions of the Platonic and other schools to the christian, and thus contributed to impair the symmetry of the christian edifice. To such writers and such theologians, who mingled the doctrines of contrary and opposing systems, most of the errors which disfigured the rites, ceremonies and doctrines of the church may be traced, which overspread the whole christian world with darkness, until illuminated

by the glorious rays of the sun of the reformation. So much was Clemens captivated with the Grecian philosophy, that he declared, that "philosophy was communicated to the Greeks from Heaven, as their proper testament or covenant, and that it was to them what the law of Moses was to the Hebrews." Among the peculiar doctrines taught by Clemens, are the following, which will show to what extent he mingled the doctrines of Plato with those of Christ. He taught that the Logos is the image of the Father, and man the image of the Logos—that the Logos proceeded from God for the purpose of creation—that the world was produced from God, as a son from a father—that there are two worlds, the sensible and the intelligible—that angels are corporeal—that man has two souls, the rational and irrational, and that the stars are animated by a rational soul.

Origen, the celebrated opponent of Celsus and the zealous defender of christianity, was born at Alexandria A. D. 184, during the reign of Commodus. He was a pupil of Clemens of Alexandria, and was instructed in the tenets of the several sects of philosophy, as preparatory to the study of the sublime doctrines of christianity—a course of instruction which the christians of the present day, would consider as not very well adapted to prepare the mind for the reception of the truths of the gospel. Origen afterwards became a disciple of Ammonius, an eclectic philosopher, whose school was attended by christians as well as pagans, who equally received the benefit of his instructions. In this school Origen continued until he made himself master of the learning of the times, and at eighteen years of age, he opened a school himself, for the double purpose of teaching, and procuring the means of subsistence for his mother and her family of six children. His school soon became celebrated, and was crowded with pupils, both christian and pagan, so that he was not only enabled to support his mother and family, but gained a considerable surplus. On the death of Clemens, he took possession of the christian catechetical school which he had established, and in this new situation he employed every means to convince his pupils of the superiority of the christian, over every other system of religion, and, at the same time, inculcated, by precept and example, a most rigid system of morals. Some of his opinions, however, partaking of that mixture of pagan philosophy and christianity, which he imbibed from Clemens and Ammonius, are

at variance with the doctrines of the bible, at least as we understand them, and his fanciful mode of interpeting certain passages, was the fruitful source of many errors. This mode of interpretation—this "spiritualising" the scriptures, arose from an opinion he adopted, that "wherever the literal sense of scripture was not obvious, the words were to be understood in a spiritual and mystical sense." This same mode of "spiritualising," we have heard employed by modern divines, and carried to a ridiculous extent. As Origen possessed lively talents, and a ready and fluent manner of delivery, he was successful in the dissemination of his opinions and gained many proselytes. He taught that the divine nature is the fountain of matter, and is, in some sense, material—that God, angels and the souls of men, are of one and the same substance—that the son proceeding from the Father like a solar ray, differs from, and is inferior to him—that every man is attended by a good and bad angel, and that human souls were formed by God before the bodies, into which they are sent as into a prison, for the punishment of their sins, and that they pass from one body to another. Origen was the first who taught the doctrine of universal salvation, a doctrine that has gained, and is still gaining, many followers. Origen died A. D. 254.

Plotinus, a celebrated disciple of the eclectic school, was born at Lycopolis in Egypt, about the year 205. After attending the different schools of Alexandria, he attached himself to Ammonius, with whom he continued eleven years. Before he became a public teacher, he travelled into Persia and India, for the purpose of making himself acquainted with the philosophy of the Magi and Gymnosophists, which he had heard highly commended. Plotinus was enthusiastically attached to the eclectic system, and for ten years confined himself to oral instruction, always conversing freely with his disciples, encouraging them to propose questions on every subject. He afterwards committed the substance of his lectures to writing, as well for his own convenience, as that of his disciples. His disciples were not very numerous, but he was so highly esteemed for his wisdom and probity, that the most difficult controversies between individuals were referred to his decision. He died A. D. 270, aged sixty-eight years; and just before he breathed his last, repeated a leading doctrine of his system, that "the divine principle

within was hastening to unite itself with that Divine Being which animates the universe," intimating that the human soul is an emanation from the divine nature, and will return to the source whence it proceeded.

To the same school belonged *Porphyry*, a learned and zealous supporter of the pagan theology. He was born A. D. 233, and was first placed under the instructions of Origen, but his education was completed by Longinus, to whom he is supposed to be indebted for a certain elegant and artificial style, which distinguishes his writings from most of the writings of the times. At thirty years of age, he became a disciple of Plotinus, then celebrated as a teacher, and made great proficiency in the acquirement of general knowledge, and particularly of the philosophy of the eclectics. He was esteemed by Plotinus as one of the greatest ornaments of his school, and was frequently employed, not only in explaining the difficulties of his system, but in refuting the objections of his opponents. After the death of Plotinus, he appeared as the open and avowed enemy of christianity, even more rancorous in his hatred than Celsus, and in opposition to its doctrines, he wrote fifteen distinct treatises, which the emperor Theodosius, in his mistaken zeal, ordered to be destroyed. A few fragments are preserved in the writings of his contemporaries. Like some of our modern enthusiasts, he pretended to have been favored with communications from Heaven, and to have beheld the Supreme Being. He died A. D. 304. Porphyry was a voluminous writer, independent of his writings against the christians, and was esteemed a man of great learning, but deficient in judgment and integrity.

The immediate follower of Porphyry, in the ecléctic school, was *Jamblichus*, a native of Chalcis in Syria. He taught the eclectic philosophy with so much success, that his school was crowded with disciples, whom he attached to himself by the freedom with which he conversed with them—laying aside the authority of the master and appearing in the amiable character of friend. He differed but little from his predecessor.

We might introduce many other christian fathers and philosophers, whose names have swelled the long list of saints in the Romish calendar, whose works were held in high esteem in the dark ages, but which were so interpreted by an assuming clergy, as to corrupt the most beautiful system of religion ever offered

to man, and instead of diffusing light and knowledge among the people, rendered them the obedient slaves of the mitre. But, as it would greatly exceed our limits, we will conclude the view we designed to take of the history of literature, to the reign of Constantine, with a brief notice of Longinus, the celebrated author of the "Treatise on the sublime."

Longinus is supposed by some to have been an Athenian by birth, by others, a native of Emessa in Syria, and was educated by *Cornelius Fronto*, a nephew of Plutarch. His youth was devoted to study, and for the acquirement of knowledge he visited various cities, and attended the most eminent teachers in eloquence and philosophy. At Athens, where he fixed his residence, he acquired so great a reputation as a writer, that every literary production was approved or rejected according to his decision; and in consequence of his extensive learning, he was distinguished by the title of the "living library." His reputation having reached Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, she invited him to her court, and not only placed her sons under his care, but took lessons herself in the Greek language, being already conversant with the Latin, Syriac and Egyptian. Longinus having enjoyed the bounty, shared the misfortunes of Zenobia, who having been defeated by the emperor Aurelian, near Antioch, shut herself up in Palmyra. The city being taken, the queen and Longinus attempted to escape into Persia, but were taken in crossing the Euphrates. Zenobia was reserved to grace the triumphal entry of Aurelian into his capital, but Longinus, through the weakness of the queen, was sacrificed to his resentment. "Genius and learning," says Gibbon, "were incapable of moving a fierce and unlettered soldier, but they had served to elevate and harmonise the soul of Longinus. Without uttering a complaint, he calmly followed the executioner, pitying his unhappy mistress, and bestowing comfort on his afflicted friends."*

Longinus was the author of many philosophical and critical works, only one of which, his "Treatise on the sublime," has escaped the ravages of time, and the more destructive ravages of Gothic violence and ignorance. At the present day this celebrated treatise enjoys, perhaps, a much higher reputation than when first published, not only on account of its intrinsic

* Gibbon's Rom. Emp. vol. 1, ch. 11.

merit, but a certain veneration we feel for the proud remains of ancient learning. It is a standard work in our seminaries of learning, and is regarded as a monument of the critical acumen of the author, as well as the best work on sublimity of writing, that has ever been published. A learned writer has observed, that he "not only discovers a lively relish for the beauties of fine writing, but is himself an excellent, and in several passages, a truly sublime writer." From his remarks upon the influence of free institutions upon literature, and particularly upon oratory, it would appear, that he knew how to estimate that liberty for which Greece was once so renowned. "Liberty," says he, "is the nurse of genius; it animates the spirit and invigorates the hopes of men; it excites honorable emulation and a desire of excelling in every thing that is laudable and praiseworthy." These sentiments, so accordant with the genuine spirit of liberty, were advanced long after the liberties of Greece had been sacrificed at the shrine of Roman ambition, and the liberties of Rome herself were prostrated at the feet of her emperors.*

CHAPTER XIV.

History of literature, from the accession of Constantine, to the foundation of the French monarchy by Clovis.

Constantine the great, ascended the imperial throne on the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian A. D. 306, and soon after, christianity became the religion of the empire; that is, instead of christians being the subjects of persecution, they were protected by the emperor, and the pagan institutions proscribed in their turn.

The conversion of Constantine from the errors of idolatry to the true religion, was caused, it is said, by one of those extraordinary circumstances, which, if true, was well calculated to strike the mind with great force in a superstitious age. But, whether his conversion was really occasioned by the miraculous

* Mosh. Eccl. Hist.; Enf. Hist. of Phil.; Cours de Lit. par Laharpe; Abbé Maury on Ora.; Gibbon's Rom. Emp.

light he is represented to have seen in the heavens, or, as with Clovis at a subsequent period, it was the result of deep-sighted policy, is as difficult to determine, as it is to penetrate the secret motives of designing men. This event is thus related by *Eusebius*, bishop of Cæsaria, whom Constantine particularly favored; "while marching with the forces in the afternoon, the trophy of the cross appeared very luminous in the heavens, higher than the sun, bearing this inscription, "IN HOC SIGNO VINCES," *by this sign thou shalt conquer.* He and his soldiers were astonished at the sight, and continued pondering on the event till night, when Christ appeared to him, while asleep, with the same sign of the cross, and directed him to make use of the symbol as his military ensign." Ambitious men have often made, and still make, religion an instrument to favor their own designs, and by this means imposing upon an ignorant and credulous multitude, advance themselves to power and authority. Constantine was not only ambitious and cunning, but was contending for the empire of the world, and he well knew how to operate upon the minds of a superstitious soldiery. He immediately embraced christianity, and animating his soldiers by calling their attention to this striking manifestation of the favor of heaven, they rushed to battle, and gained a signal victory over Maxentius, his rival. Henceforth Constantine adopted the cross as his standard, and that which was before an object of horror, in consequence of the terrible punishment it called to mind, became the badge of honor and distinction. "The same symbol sanctified the arms of the soldiers of Constantine: the cross glittered on their shields, was interwoven in their banners, and the consecrated emblems, which adorned the person of the emperor himself, were distinguished only by richer materials and more exquisite workmanship."*

The political and religious character of Constantine is variously estimated, as the particulars of his history are drawn from christian or pagan writers. By the one he is represented as a glorious prince, the friend of learning and the arts, possessing every quality necessary to constitute a great man; by the other he is represented as destitute of every principle of virtue and honor, a bigot in the new religion he had embraced, and often

* Gibbon's Rom. Emp.; Euseb. Life of Cons. Mosh. Ecc. Hist.

sacrificing his subjects to the gratification of his passions and his own personal vanity. In the front rank of his apologists stands his friend and biographer, Eusebius, who fails not to place the character of his hero in the most favorable light, and extol him as a pious and devout christian. In the variety of opinions with regard to his character, the remarks of Lardner appear to us perfectly judicious; "it is next to impossible," says he, "for human wisdom and discretion, in the course of many years filled with action, not to be surprised into some injustice, through the bias of affection, or the specious suggestions of artful and designing people. Though, therefore, there may have been some transactions in this reign which cannot be easily justified, and others that must be condemned, yet we are not to consider Constantine as a cruel prince or a bad man."

During the reign of Constantine general literature made but little progress; it required more than ordinary encouragement and exertions to recover from the blow it received after the accession of Commodus. Constantine having declared christianity to be the religion of the empire, the schools of the pagans were closed, and among the christians there was not learning enough to supply their place: hence it rapidly declined, and, in a short time, the christian world presented little more than incoherent treatises on controverted points of doctrine, to procure the parchment for which, many of the most celebrated productions of ancient genius were erased, to the great loss of future ages. The greater number of the bishops and presbyters were entirely destitute of all learning and education, and inculcated the idea that all sorts of erudition, were pernicious to true piety and religion.*

The influence of christianity upon learning, or rather the influence of its professors, in this and after ages, was very different from what appears to us to be its natural and obvious tendency, namely, to encourage learning and science, and whatever is connected with them, that by enlightening the mind, truth may dispel error, virtue triumph over vice, and universal charity unite all men, in the benevolent purpose of promoting each others' happiness. It is an observation confirmed by experience, that wherever the christian doctrines, pure and undefiled by the errors of superstition, exercise an influence, the mind of man ex-

* Mosheim's Ecc. Hist. vol. 1.

pands; new sources of information open before him, and he grasps with avidity at whatever seems calculated to enlarge and improve his faculties, and fit him in a greater degree, for the active and useful purposes of life. His mental energies are not called into action, for the sole purpose of supporting the opinions of one particular sect, to which he may be attached, to the exclusion of every other object. He walks abroad, and contemplating the wide expanse of nature's works, and how equally the allwise and benevolent Creator has dispensed his blessings, he feels none of the spirit of persecution, but a generous and liberal disposition towards all. It was not so during the period under review. Christianity had been persecuted for three centuries with the most rancorous violence—its professors had been exposed to every indignity, and the most cruel and horrid punishments were inflicted upon those unfortunate and unhappy beings who had the hardihood to profess christianity, in opposition to the decrees of the ruling powers. When, however, christianity became the dominant religion, and christian princes wielded the sceptre, the pagans were persecuted in their turn; "the gods of Rome were publicly insulted; their statues broken and their worshippers oppressed. The thunder of penal laws was pointed against the ancient rites; it was made capital to offer sacrifices which had formerly been enjoined by law; the altar of victory, that altar so dear to the nation, was demolished before the eyes of the senate, and every pagan, every man who did not conform to the christian creed, was excluded from all employments, civil and military." In this disastrous state of the empire, torn to pieces by civil and religious dissensions, the seminaries of learning came in for their full share of affliction, particularly such as were under the direction of pagan teachers, and in which something like a literary taste and spirit still existed. The pagan schools being closed, schools were opened in their stead under ignorant monks, or inferior clergy, in which little was taught that could enlighten the mind or improve the understanding, because the superior clergy, whose influence was already great, found it very convenient to suppress all kinds of learning except among their own body.

With the exception of a few writers who attained some distinction, the learning of the times was chiefly directed against the supporters of Arian heresy. *Arius*, the father of this heresy,

was a presbyter of Alexandria, of more than usual learning and eloquence; he possessed a bold and daring spirit, and his natural talents had been greatly improved by the frequent controversies in which he had been engaged. Arius maintained, in an assembly of presbyters at Alexandria, that the Son was essentially different from the Father; that there was a time hid in the depths of eternity, when he did not exist; that he was a creature brought into being by the will of the Supreme God; that although a created being, inferior and subordinate to the Father, he was the framer of the world, and governed the universe as the representative of the eternal and unchangeable divinity. These doctrines were making such rapid advances in the public mind, that they excited the attention of Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, who publicly excommunicated Arius and his followers. Arius retired to Palestine, where he found a protector in Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea. The contest still continued, and at length reached such a height, that sober argument was abandoned, and, in its stead, every epithet that malignant and fiery zeal could employ, was used on both sides. Constantine, in order to heal the breach, first wrote to the bishop of Alexandria and to Arius, exhorting them to cease quarrelling, and restore peace to the church, but, finding his exhortations of no avail, he summoned a general council A. D. 325, at Nice, a city of Bythinia. This celebrated council consisted of two thousand ecclesiastics, from all parts of the christian world, amongst whom were three hundred and eighteen bishops. In this council Constantine presided in person, but neither his presence or authority could prevent the most indecent and disgraceful contests among the fathers of the council, who appear to have thought, that the principal object of this great convocation was, to adjust their own private disputes, and not the important question that brought them together. At length, by the exertions and influence of the emperor, the council was brought to consider the main question, and decided against the doctrines of Arius, and ordered his books to be burnt and himself banished to Illyria. His followers were compelled to give their assent to a creed composed and adopted by the council, which, of course, essentially differed from the doctrines he taught, and Constantine ordered all those who should conceal any of the works of Arius to be put to death, even without the form of trial, but at the same time, with

singular inconsistency, permitted the great author of the heresy to live.

Among the few writers worthy of notice in the reign of Constantine, the most distinguished were *Lanctantius* and *Eusebius*. Lanctantius was born at Firmium, a town of Italy, from whence he received the sirname of *Firmianus*. There is but little known of his family, or of his early life. At Rome he attracted the notice of Dioclesian, as a rhetorician, and was by him selected to teach rhetoric in Nicomedia, where he continued some time after the persecution of the christians under Dioclesian. He escaped the fate which threatened him, but whether by the special favor of the emperor, or by his own ingenuity, is not known. On the accession of Constantine, when christianity became the religion of the empire, and the persecution of the christians had ceased, Lanctantius was appointed to teach Crispus, the son of Constantine, the Latin language. He was a voluminous writer, and his pen was principally employed in defence of the christian religion, or on subjects immediately connected therewith, which were calculated to display its superiority over the institutions of paganism. His works are written with greater purity, and discover more erudition, than was usual in his age. His principal works are, "On the works of God," and "Divine Institutions." In the first he treats of the magnificent works of the Creator, and his "Divine Institutions," is an able defence of christianity against the attacks of the pagans. On account of the eloquence of his style, he was called the "Christian Cicero."

Eusebius was born in Palestine, in the city of Cæsaria: He was ordained a presbyter at an early age, and taught a school in his native city with considerable reputation. During the persecution of the christians under Dioclesian, he first removed to Tyre, and then retired to Egypt, where he was imprisoned, but in a short time was released. When the persecution ceased he returned to Palestine, and was elected bishop of Cæsaria. He was a distinguished member of the celebrated council of Nice A. D. 325, and opened the proceedings by an address to the emperor. He was also a prominent member of subsequent councils, and although he favored the Arians, he was honored with particular marks of the regard of Constantine. He died about the year A. D. 340. Eusebius was one of the most learned men of his time, and was not only remarkable for his extraor-

dinary and critical knowledge of the scriptures, but was even distinguished for his acquirements in general literature. He was a voluminous writer, but "his language," says a learned critic of modern times, "is neither elegant nor perspicuous; and where it aims at elegance and sublimity, it is usually turgid and perplexed." The most valuable of his works extant, and, perhaps the most valuable of any he wrote or published, is his "Ecclesiastical History," which contains the history of the church from the birth of Christ to the death of Licinius, a period of 324 years, and furnishes the principal information we possess concerning the first ages of christianity.

About the time of Constantine flourished Ossian, the bard of Morven, one of Caledonia's most celebrated bards, and who is justly entitled to a conspicuous place in the history of literature. Few poets of ancient or modern times surpass this "son of the mist," in the chief requisites of a poet; in energy and boldness of language, sublimity of style and grandeur of imagery. Oppressed as polite literature was, under Commodus and his successors, the "tuneful nine" seem to have fled the mild and genial climates of Greece and Rome, and taken refuge among the mountains of the north; and amidst the dearth of political talent in the south of Europe, it is grateful and refreshing to listen to the notes of the minstrel, resounding among Caledonia's cloud-capt hills.

Ossian was the eldest son of Fingal, king of Morven, whose dominions lay among the mountains in the west of Scotland. Fingal was celebrated as a warrior amongst the warlike chieftains of his time; "he was terrible as the spirit of Trenmor, when in a whirlwind he comes to Morven to see the children of his pride; he was like a dark and stormy cloud, edged round with the lightning of heaven." Early in life Ossian married Everallin, the "dark haired" daughter of Branno, one of the many kings who then ruled in Ireland; by her he had one son, Oscar, afterwards distinguished as a warrior, and who was killed in battle with Cairbar, king of Ireland. In the fourth book of Fingal, he speaks of his courtship of Everallin. To her he appears to have been tenderly attached, and frequently alludes to her in his poems. Everallin died in giving birth to Oscar, and it does not appear that Ossian ever married again. At the period, and in the country, of which we are now speaking, it was not

unusual for the warrior and the bard to be united, hence we find that Ossian was as renowned in war, as became his high lineage, as he was distinguished as a bard; thus, we often find him in the thickest of the fight, dealing death among his foes; "were his steps covered with darkness, yet would not Ossian fly; his soul would meet him and say, *does the bard of Selma fear the foe?* No: his joy is in the midst of battle." Ossian lived to an advanced age, and became blind; he survived all his family and the companions of his early days: In the decrepitude of age, and blind withal, he appears to have enjoyed the society of Malvina, the betrothed wife of Oscar, whom he also survived, and whose death he thus feelingly laments: "Malvina! where art thou with thy songs, with the soft sound of thy steps? Pleasant be thy rest, O lovely beam! Soon hast thou set on our hills! the steps of thy departure were stately, like the moon on the blue trembling wave. But thou hast left us in darkness, first of the maids of Lutha! Soon hast thou set, daughter of generous Toscar! But thou risest like the beam of the east, among the spirits of thy friends, where they sit in their stormy halls, the chambers of the thunder."

Ossian lived in a rude and barbarous age, and in a country where the refinements and luxuries of Roman manners had not reached. He is a poet of nature, and his works will hold a high rank, not only among the existing monuments of the literature of ancient nations, but as an example of grandeur and sublimity of style, which the artificial poetry of modern times has not been able to reach. In his poems we have a striking picture of the manners of the age in which he lived, and of the chieftain in his hall, in his camp, in battle and in the chase. Valor and skill in war are the themes which generally occupy his pen, because in all rude nations, such qualities are most highly valued. He is, however, not unmindful of the more gentle and amiable virtues of parental and filial tenderness, and his frequent allusions to the death of Everallin and Oscar show, that he possessed a heart susceptible of the most refined feelings and tender emotions. The style of Ossian, like that of all the ancient bards, is bold, energetic and highly figurative, expressing the noblest sentiments by the most appoeite images. He does not indulge in that redundancy of expression, with which mo-

dern poets too often clothe their ideas, frequently making obscurity more obscure.

On the publication of a translation of the poems of Ossian by Macpherson, they were immediately pronounced forgeries, and the existence of such a person as Ossian declared fabulous. The authenticity of the poems being thus assailed, a wide field for discussion was opened, into which some of the most distinguished scholars of the day entered with much zeal, and their genuineness was combated and defended with great learning and ability. Although we find some who regard them as the sole productions of the genius of Macpherson, yet, from careful researches in the Highlands and the Hebrides, so many poems of a similar character are found to have been preserved among the people, that their authenticity is now generally admitted, and Ossian, instead of being looked upon as a creature of the imagination, is acknowledged to have possessed a "local habitation," and was renowned in "days of yore" as a warrior and a poet.

As Ossian belonged to that class known by the name of minstrels or bards, we will here take the opportunity of saying a few words concerning them. The Celtic and Scandinavian nations, were distinguished for their bards or minstrels.* The use of letters being unknown to them, the history of the times and the martial deeds of their heroes and chieftains, were transmitted from age to age, in the songs of their bards. According to Tacitus in his "Manners of the Germans,"† the recital by their bards, of the valiant achievements of their warriors, was employed by the Germans to inflame their courage on the eve of battle. In much later times the Scandinavian bards, or *Scalds*, as they were called, were in high estimation; they always attended their kings, and were often employed by them in offices of the highest trust. Among the Celtic nations, the bards also enjoyed high privileges; they were exempted from taxes and military services, and their persons were held sacred and inviolable. When they attended in the field of battle, for the purpose of noting passing events, they were protected by a guard, and at all festivals and public assemblies, they were seated near

* Scandinavia included Norway, Sweden and Denmark, and the Celtic nations that part of Europe which lies west and south of the Rhine beyond the Pyrenees, together with the Britons, Irish, Welch, Highlanders, and the inhabitants of the Western Isles. † Chap III.

the king or chieftain. The bards of Britain were originally divided into two classes, namely: the sacred or religious bards, who sung hymns in honor of the gods, and the secular bards, who sung of battles. In Wales an annual congress was held, in which he who was most distinguished, was honored with a silver chain. As writing was then unknown, and tradition was the only means of preserving the history of events, these assemblies were of great importance, and show the consequence of the bards in other respects than mere reciters of poetry—they were the "brief abstract and chronicles of the times." In these assemblies whatever was considered of sufficient importance to be transmitted to future ages, was examined with the most scrutinizing care, and, if approved, was afterwards recited at provincial meetings, and committed to the memory of their disciples. It is not the least remarkable fact, with regard to this institution of the bards, that it is considered by many as the parent source from whence freemasonry sprung. The fraternity, if they choose to examine the subject, can readily determine, whether there is such a resemblance between their manner of communicating and preserving the tenets of their order, and the practices of the bards as would justify such an opinion. In the time of Edward III. the bards were numerous in Wales, and so great was the effect of their songs, in recounting the warlike deeds of their ancient warriors, they so inflamed the courage of their countrymen, that the conquest was far from being an easy one. Edward afterwards commanded a general massacre of the Welch bards, to prevent any future excitement of their native courage to avenge their wrongs.

Cold is Cadwallo's tongue
That hush'd the stormy main:
Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed:
Mountains ye mourn in vain
Modred, whose magic song
Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topp'd head.
On dreary Arvon's shore they lie,
Smear'd with gore and ghastly pale:
Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail,
The famish'd eagle screams and passes by.
Gray.

Among no people were the bards or minstrels, held in higher estimation than among the Highlanders of Scotland. They

were almost always employed as ambassadors between contending chiefs, and their characters were held in the same reverence as in the days of Homer; even he who would not have hesitated to murder his brother to gratify his ambition, would have "feared to stretch his sword to the bards." In later times, a succession of bards was retained in the service of every Highland chieftain, whose special care it was, to hand down the memorable actions of the chieftains and warriors of the clan. As soon as the knowledge of letters became generally diffused, the custom of retaining bards in the service of great families fell into disuse in most countries, and they degenerated into strolling ballad singers. Scotland alone retained them until about the time of the union of the two kingdoms, in consequence of the Highland chieftains maintaining a stubborn freedom among their mountains, even after their independence as a nation had fallen before British power.

Constantine died A. D. 337, and was succeeded by his three sons, Constantine II, Constantius and Constans. The imprudent division of the empire between the three brothers caused, as such divisions ever will, discontent and disturbances, which terminated in the defeat and death of Constantine in a petty conflict, and in the assassination of Constans. On the death of his brothers Constantius became sole emperor. He possessed, perhaps, more religious zeal than his father, and was more deeply versed in theology, but he possessed few of the qualifications necessary for the government of a mighty empire, particularly when agitated by domestic troubles and foreign wars. His reign was nearly one continued scene of religious disputation, occasioned by the violent and disgraceful contests between the Catholics and Arians, who appeared to think, that true religion consisted in fiery controversies about points of doctrine, and not in pursuing the humble path of duty, prescribed by their "Lord and master," and in practising the principles of benevolence and brotherly love laid down in the scriptures, which they professed to take for their guide. This reign, therefore, presents nothing remarkable, or worthy of notice in the history of literature, unless the volumes written in favor of, and against the doctrine of *consubstantiality*, which agitated the church, should be so regarded. On this point we think there can be but one opinion, that such controversies are as uninteresting as they are useless,

and tend rather to injure than promote, the cause of true religion. From these disputes Constantius was scarcely diverted by the formidable power of Sapor, king of Persia, which threatened to overturn the throne of the Cæsars, already tottering to its base; and whilst Mesopotamia was overran by the Persian host, the attention of Constantius was directed to the ecclesiastical councils of Rimini and Silencia, instead of adopting means to repel the invader. This conduct of the emperor was far from pleasing the army, and made way, A. D. 361, for the elevation to the imperial dignity, of Julian, surnamed the Apostate.

Few princes have ever ascended a throne under more favorable circumstances, so far as regarded public opinion, than Julian. He had gained the affections of the soldiery by his strict attention to their wants, and by sharing in all their fatigues. As governor of Gaul, he discharged the duties of his office with moderation and justice; and so effectually did he conceal his religious opinions, that even the watchful eye of Hillary, bishop of Poictiers, was deceived. The pious prelate took every opportunity of sounding his praise, and spoke of him as one who would maintain the honor of the church, and uphold the true faith. But the bishop was deceived. Julian in the early part of his life was carefully instructed in literature and science by christian professors, and while residing in Nicomedia, he was expressly forbid by the emperor Constantius, to attend the lectures of the heathen philosophers, particularly those of *Libanus*, a philosopher of great reputation at that time. This prohibition, however, only excited a desire to attend the pagan schools, and become acquainted with their different systems. Regardless of the positive injunctions of the emperor, he took every opportunity of conversing with pagan philosophers, and soon became attached to that system of Platonic philosophy, of which we have spoken above, but which differed so essentially from the genuine and uncorrupted system of its renowned founder. Julian finished his studies at Athens, and was there initiated into the Eleusynian mysteries, which, no doubt, had the effect of strengthening and confirming his predilection for the ancient worship. Besides, he there studied the purer system of Plato, and adopted the costume of a philosopher.

Thus educated, it was not at all surprisig that Julian, when firmly seated upon the throne, should have exhibited strong

symptoms of attachment to the pagan; and aversion to the christian system of religion. He determined to restore the pagan worship, and to that end assumed the almost forgotten office of sovereign pontiff, and often descended from the throne to embrue his hands in the blood of the slaughtered victim. Although with apparent frankness he proclaimed free toleration to the christian worship, his great object was, its final subversion, and the complete restoration of the pagan rites and ceremonies. Under the mask of moderation, he attacked christianity with consummate art. He dismissed by degrees, christian professors from all public employments and closed their schools, whilst he was himself surrounded by philosophers, whose hatred of christianity equalled his. Julian possessed great abilities, he was equally qualified for the cabinet or the field, and had he not been cut off in the thirty-second year of his age, in a battle with the Persians, he might, in a considerable degree, have effected his object. The portrait of Julian, like that of the first Constantine, has been variously exhibited, as the lineaments have been portrayed by a pagan, or a christian pencil. It is acknowledged, however, by both, that he was more distinguished for a love of learning, and afforded it more encouragement, than any emperor who had, for a series of years, filled the throne of Augustus. He possessed an intimate acquaintance with the tenets of the Platonic school, as taught by the Alexandrian and Athenian philosophers, but his philosophy was tinctured with magic and other superstitious observances, unworthy his otherwise enlightened mind. Amidst all his public duties, and the cares of empire, he still found leisure to devote to literary pursuits, and to the composition of various works on different subjects, many of which are lost. Besides other works still extant, he wrote a history of Gaul, and a satire upon all the Roman emperors, from Julius Cæsar to Constantine.

Having heretofore spoken of the decline of arts and literature in Athens, after its subjection to the Roman empire, and having several times alluded to its schools subsequently established, we will here observe, that although for many years almost deserted by learned men, the schools of Athens again came into notice under the reigns of Adrian and the Antonines, who did much to restore them to their ancient honors and celebrity. Adrian, a patron of learning, founded a library and established schools of

rhetoric and the principal sects of philosophy. These schools were liberally endowed, and soon became distinguished for the number of scholars that attended them, and the erudition of their instructers. Adrian assigned to the teachers salaries from the public purse, which were discontinued by Constantine and his sons, but were restored by Julian. Having ordered the christian schools to be closed, those of Alexandria and Athens were the chief instruments by means of which, Julian expected to overturn the christian system and restore paganism to its former influence. He hoped, that by disseminating the principles of philosophy by means of celebrated teachers, by ridiculing the christian religion, and by rekindling the fatal dissensions of the Catholics and Arians, which had already been productive of so much mischief, that in a short time every vestige of christianity would be rooted out, the professors of which he pretended to regard "rather as objects of compassion than hatred, who abandoned the worship of the gods, to adore the remains of carcasses or the bones of dead men."

Julian was succeeded by *Jovian*, captain of the guards, who had been educated in the principles of christianity, and who, on his accession, was as zealous in his endeavors to restore the christian worship, as his predecessor had been to destroy it. For this purpose, therefore, he issued an edict re-establishing the christian as the religious system of the empire, and abolishing the pagan worship, at the same time observing such a course of conduct as was sanctioned by the public good, and the dictates of sound policy. He left every one free to exercise his own religion according to the dictates of his own conscience, and in a council held at Antioch, where the Nicene creed was confirmed, he declared his intention to molest no man for his belief. Jovian reigned only one year, but in that short time, "the genius of paganism, which had been fondly raised and cherished by the acts of Julian, sunk irrecoverably in the dust."

Jovian was succeeded by Valentinian I, Valens, Gratian, Valentinian II, and lastly by Theodosius the Great, who ascended the throne A. D. 379, and died A. D. 395.

Between the time of Julian and the reign of Theodosius, flourished several Latin writers and philosophers of some note, among whom was Augustine, a distinguished father of the church, afterwards canonised. He was born at Tagaste, in Africa, in the

year 354. He possessed, says one of his admirers, a "sublime genius, an uninterrupted zeal and zealous pursuit of truth, an indefatigable application, invincible patience, sincere piety and a subtle and lively wit." At an early age he appears to have had considerable taste for learning, and became familiar with the writings of Cicero, and deeply studied the works of Aristotle. The abstract notions of the divine nature, which he collected from the philosophy of the latter, made such an impression upon his mind, that he rejected some of the leading principles of the christian faith, and was led to adopt the Manichean doctrine of two independent principles, one good, the other evil, which, in its turn, he rejected, and adopted others equally untenable. Unsettled in his faith, he opened at Milan a school of rhetoric, for which he seems to have been well qualified. Here he met with St. Ambrose, then, or afterwards, bishop of Milan, who, by dint of argument and the force of eloquence, brought him back to the fold of Christ. After this he devoted himself exclusively to the service of religion, becoming one of its most able and zealous advocates, and was finally advanced to the dignity of bishop of Hippo in Africa. St. Augustine wrote many treatises in support of the doctrines of the church, which enjoyed considerable celebrity in his day; his principal and most celebrated work is entitled, "*De Civitate Dei*," in which he sets forth the beauties of the christian system, and enforces the necessity of obedience to the commands of God, in order to insure peace of mind here, and eternal happiness hereafter.

Contemporary with St. Augustine flourished a female philosopher of the eclectic school, named *Hypatia*, celebrated for her extensive learning, her devotion to the principles of her school and her tragical and untimely end. She was the daughter of a distinguished mathematician of Alexandria, and possessing an acute and penetrating judgment, her talents were cultivated with great care by her father and her preceptors in the various branches of education. She entered with uncommon ardor upon the study of philosophy, and prosecuted it with so much success, that she at length became a public teacher, and her house was the resort of persons of learning and distinction. At this time *Cyril* filled the patriarchal chair of Alexandria. He was a man of great violence of temper, and suspecting that Hypatia was

concerned in the opposition that Orestes, the prefect of Alexandria, offered to his ecclesiastical tyranny, he caused a mob to seize her, as she was one day returning from the schools, and carry her to the Cæsarian church, where she was inhumanly murdered, and her body, after being torn limb from limb, was committed to the flames. This disgraceful event occurred in the reign of Theodosius II, A. D. 415. Contemporary writers speak of her as being remarkable for the correctness of her deportment and purity of life—slander did not dare to whisper a syllable against her virtue. From any participation in this cruel and unexpected murder, Cyril endeavored to exculpate himself, but as the chief person concerned in the outrage was not only protected by him, but enjoyed his special favor, his participation in the foul crime cannot be doubted.

During this period also flourished *Ausonius*, who was born at Bourdeaux in the fourth century. He was educated at Toulouse under the direction of his uncle, who was a professor of rhetoric, and he is said to have made uncommon progress in the various studies assigned him. At thirty years of age, he was appointed teacher of grammar, and soon after teacher of rhetoric, in his native city. He lived to a great age, and under successive emperors, he filled various public offices, among others that of consul. He enjoyed considerable reputation as a poet in his day, but his poetical genius and talents have been generally overrated. His productions bear evident marks of negligence, but faulty as they are, they rise above the ordinary level of his contemporaries.

Under the government of Theodosius, the most vigorous and effectual measures were taken for the suppression of the pagan worship throughout the empire. The historians of his time represent the character of Theodosius in the most favorable light, and as eminently deserving the epithet of *great*, which his grateful subjects spontaneously bestowed upon him. He, no doubt, possessed great qualities, and had his reign been longer, many of those unfortunate events that occurred under his successors, might have been averted, and the Roman empire preserved, at least for some time longer, from destruction. He appears to have received a liberal education, liberal at least for the age in which he lived, when literature was rapidly declining; and he appears, also, to have liberally encouraged such talents and such

arts as were useful in their nature, and calculated to improve the condition of mankind. Happy would it have been for the world, had the successors of Theodosius possessed his enterprising genius, his vigorous mind, and his anxiety to improve the condition of the human race subject to their control, by the enactment of wholesome laws. Theodosius reigned but sixteen years, and on his death, A. D. 395, the Roman empire was divided between his two sons, Arcadius and Honorius; the former was styled Emperor of the East, the latter Emperor of the West. Neither of them were capable of wielding the sceptre of their father, and the consequence was, that the western empire soon fell before the victorious arms of the northern barbarians, who commenced their incursions in the reign of Valens, but were kept in check by the power of Theodosius. These invaders were wandering tribes who traversed the immense plains of Tartary, and were renowned for their invincible courage, and the rapidity of their conquests; war was an occupation in which they delighted, making a sport of danger and even braving death with marks of joy. They left their native deserts in search of milder climates and more fertile lands, with no other title than their swords. To such enemies, inured to hardships and all the vicissitudes of war, with victory perching on their standards, and commanded by such generals as Alaric, Genseric and Atilla, the feeble and dissolute legions of Arcadius and Honorius, could oppose no effectual resistance, and in less than one hundred years the mighty fabric of Rome's imperial power crumbled into ruins. The Visigoths possessed themselves of Spain; the Franks of Gaul; the Ostrogoths of Italy, and the Huns of Pannonia, or Hungary.

The incursions of the barbarians, and the consequent fall of the western empire, in the reign of Romulus Augustus, and its division into separate kingdoms, were extremely prejudicial to the cultivation and dissemination of learning. The continual wars and tumultuous scenes which followed, the religious contests that agitated Europe, and the general dislike of the new settlers to the arts of peace, would have totally extinguished what remained of a knowledge of the liberal arts and sciences, had they not found protection among the higher clergy, and a refuge in the cells of the monks. They were cultivated just enough to keep them from perishing, by those who scarcely un-

derstood their value, and in a manner more the result of chance, than any real desire for their preservation. Those persons who had devoted themselves to a monastic life, were obliged to employ a portion of the day in studying the works of the fathers and doctors of the church, which were regarded as rich treasures of heavenly wisdom, scarcely inferior to the sacred scriptures themselves. In collecting the various works of the fathers to form monastic libraries, many volumes of ancient Greek and Roman learning found their way to their shelves. These works were transcribed by monks, whose bodily infirmities rendered them incapable of more severe labor, and who thus employed themselves, as much to relieve the ennui attendant upon their secluded and monotonous life, as the actual desire of multiplying copies of pagan works, and disseminating a knowledge of pagan literature. To these men, who were really too ignorant to avail themselves of the mental treasures within their grasp, are we indebted for the preservation of those ancient writings which now delight the scholar, and instruct and improve mankind. In the schools which were, in some places, attached to the churches, but little attention was paid even to the rudiments of learning, because those who were appointed to teach, were not qualified for the office, and because the dignified clergy inculcated the pernicious maxim, that learning was injurious to piety, and obstructed the progress of religion. Under such circumstances it will be readily seen, that learning would rapidly decline, and ignorance and superstition occupy its place.

For some time the state of learning was more flourishing in the eastern empire, which did not suffer so much from the hostile invasion of the barbarians. The emperors, although deeply engaged in the religious disputes of the times, encouraged a spirit of emulation by the rewards and honors they distributed among those who cultivated the different branches of learning. In the sixth century, the sciences were cultivated with much less ardor, and literature became so depressed by the strong arm of power, that the number of men of learning was greatly diminished. Much of this depression may be attributed to the narrow and contracted views of the emperor Justinian, who reigned in the sixth century, and whose pandects and institutes have contributed more to his renown, than his talents for government, or the victories of his generals. Justinian was a zealous christian,

and valued himself upon his knowledge, and his skill in theology; and as the schools of pagan learning offended his orthodoxy, he determined to shut up the schools of philosophy that remained at Athens, and deprived the professors of the salaries which his predecessors had allowed them from the public purse. By thus closing the schools of Athens, which, at that time, were the principal, if not the only seats of learning, in which the literature and philosophy of the ancients were taught, and the chief means of acquiring knowledge being cut off, the consequence was, that in a short time the Greek language fell so much into neglect, that in the western empire few were found capable of reading the ancient Greek writers in the original, but were obliged to content themselves with careless and imperfect translations. In consequence of the edict of Justinian above-mentioned, the sect of modern platonics, of which we have already taken some notice, ceased to exist, and upon its destruction arose the modern peripatetic school, or school founded upon the principles of Aristotle, which were made known to the christians of Europe, through the Arabian philosophers of Spain.*

CHAPTER XV.

History of literature, from the foundation of the French monarchy by Clovis, to the reign of Charlemagne.

Before the introduction of christianity into France, or Gaul, as it was then called, learning was confined to the Druids, with the exception of the Greek colony at Marseilles.

The Druids were the philosophers as well as the priests of Gaul, and exercised great influence over the minds of the people. They were divided into several orders, and the whole were governed by an arch-Druid, whose authority was supreme. He was chosen from among those who were most distinguished for their knowledge, and as the station was one of great power, the election often produced such excitement as to cause a resort

* Mosh. Ecc. Hist.; Enf. Hist. of Phil.; Gib. Rom. Emp.; Millot's Gen. Hist.; Macpherson's Ossian; Edin. Enc. art. Ossian; Sismondi's Hist. des Rep. Ital.

to arms. There were three orders, the Bards, the Eubates and the Druids. The Bards sung the praises of their illustrious men, and were the poets and musicians; the Eubates made researches into the order of things, and endeavored to lay open the hidden secrets of nature, and the Druids, who possessed the highest power, gave laws to the Bards and Eubates, who were obliged, on every occasion, to give precedence to them, and were not allowed to do any thing without their consent and approbation.

The powers and privileges enjoyed by the Druids, properly so called, were very extensive. No sacred rite could be performed without their aid, and through them the people offered up their thanksgivings, sacrifices and prayers. Their persons were esteemed sacred and inviolable; they were exempted from all taxes and military services; they exercised a civil and criminal jurisdiction, and those who did not obey their decrees, were interdicted the sacrifices, after which no person dared to hold communication or converse with them. They held an annual court in a consecrated grove, and before them, all who had any private suits or controversies appeared, and were bound to submit to their decrees. Like the Egyptian priests they had two sects of religious doctrines and opinions, one of which they communicated to their favored disciples, who at the time of their initiation took a solemn oath to keep this system of doctrines a profound secret. In order that they might be delivered with more solemnity and preserved with more care from vulgar eyes, they taught their mysteries in the deepest recesses of gloomy forests, or in the still more gloomy caves of the earth. Cæsar informs us that the principal doctrines of the Druids were, the immortality of the soul, and the existence and power of the gods; that they believed in one living and true god, whom they represented in various forms, and under different characters and names, adapting their public worship to what they conceived to be suited to vulgar minds. Their doctrines were contained in many thousand verses, which their disciples were obliged to commit to memory, and which required no less than twenty years. Some writers are of opinion, that they taught the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul, differing, however, from some of the philosophers of the Pythagorean school in this, that the transmigration was from one human body to another, and

that it did not inhabit the bodies of other animals. Besides the male Druids, there were also Druidesses, who were divided into three classes. The first class lived in great retirement, and pretended to supernatural knowledge and power, to foretell future events, to cure diseases, and to raise storms and calm them at their will. They were held in great veneration by the people, and consulted upon almost every occasion in which they felt themselves interested. The second class were the assistants and companions of the Druids, and were married women. The third class performed the servile work of the temples, the sacrifices and dwellings.

The Druids regarded the oak and the mistletoe that grew upon it, with peculiar veneration, and as the immediate gift of heaven for the most valuable purposes. In their own language they called it the *all-healing*, to express the healing virtues and qualities they attached to it. The sixth day of the moon was chosen as the proper time to gather it, which was done with great ceremony by one of the priests, who, clothed in white, ascended the tree and cut it off with a golden knife. The plant called *vervain* was also highly esteemed by them for its rare qualities; from it they extracted an ointment considered efficacious in preventing and curing all diseases. This plant they gathered in the dog days and in a moonless night. Things of this sort, although superstitious and absurd, are innocent in their nature, but how can we reconcile with their boasted refinement, their sacrifices of human victims? With circumstances of savage cruelty, upon solemn and important occasions, they sacrificed human victims, and Pliny says, that to feed upon the dead bodies thus offered in sacrifice, they esteemed most wholesome. The victims were usually selected from among the criminals condemned to death; but when none of these were to be had, they did not scruple to sacrifice innocent persons.

With regard to the learning of the Druids much has been said by different writers, in order to establish their claims to a high state of intellectual improvement. Diogenes Laertius, who flourished about A. D. 210, places them in the same rank, in point of learning and philosophy, with the Chaldeans, the Magi of Persia, and the Gymnosophists of India; and Cæsar, who had ample opportunities of making himself acquainted with their

pursuits, says, that they had formed large systems of philosophy, that required twenty years of unremitted application to master, and that they entertained various opinions concerning the stars and their motions, the magnitude of the earth and the world, and the general nature of things. Dr. Henry, the learned author of "The History of Great Britain," has labored at some length to prove, that the British Druids, from whom it is supposed the Druids of Gaul received their origin, were skilled in every science, particularly in astronomy, geometry, geography, rhetoric, medicine, anatomy, surgery, botany and the mechanic arts. We readily admit, that the knowledge of this singular order of men, in the above branches of learning, were greatly superior to that of the people by whom they were surrounded, but we think the extraordinary knowledge attributed to them, is far beyond that state of society in which they lived, and cannot be fairly inferred from the existing accounts of those who were contemporary with them, and who were most familiarly acquainted with the state of learning amongst them. These accounts are neither numerous nor explicit, and are confined to the details of a few Roman writers. The Druids themselves, although the use of letters was probably not unknown to them, never committed to writing the peculiar tenets of their philosophy, or the fruits of their learning; hence, we can form but a very imperfect opinion of the true state of science among them, and we may safely conclude that they possessed no more philosophy or learning, than the priests of other religions in the same state of society, and that what they did possess, they employed rather for the purpose of encouraging a slavish superstition, and maintaining their assumed authority over the people, than for any purpose of general good. Certain it is, that whatever benefits their learning was capable of conferring, was never felt beyond the limits of their own order. To support a favorite theory, men of lively fancy too often wander into the field of conjecture, and give to the public the suggestions of a heated imagination, as the result of sober inquiry and laborious investigation, and hence it is, that we are so often misled and induced to adopt erroneous opinions of men and things. The Romans were much opposed to Druidism. Augustus issued a decree for its suppression, which was revived by Tiberius and Claudius, in whose reigns it was nearly

suppressed in Gaul, and a few years thereafter almost every vestige of this ancient superstition was entirely obliterated.*

We have, heretofore, taken no notice of the pagan schools of Gaul, from which issued some of the most distinguished men of the Roman empire. We will, therefore, advert to that subject, before we introduce to our readers the few distinguished writers between the reigns of Clovis and Charlemagne.

About five hundred and eighty-nine years before Christ, a colony of Phocians, attracted by the mildness of the climate and its advantageous situation for commerce, established themselves at Masilia, now Marseilles. They brought with them considerable knowledge of Grecian literature, which they cultivated with so much care, that the Romans, when they first discovered them, were charmed with their advancement in arts and science. As soon as they had established themselves in their new situation, they instituted schools for teaching eloquence, philosophy, medicine, mathematics, and other branches of learning, but the advantages to be derived from their schools, do not appear to have spread beyond the limits of the colony, until after the conquest of Gaul by the Romans. The Romans were so highly pleased with the gentle manners and regular conduct, and the genius and skill manifested by this distant colony of Greeks, that they conferred upon them all the privileges of Roman citizens, and in return found the colonists faithful allies; but in the civil war between Cæsar and Pompey, having embraced the fortunes of the latter, the victorious Cæsar reduced their privileges.

From the schools of Marseilles issued many learned men, who were distinguished even in the reigns of the degenerate successors of Augustus; some of these we have already noticed. Their example and influence contributed to excite a spirit of learning and literary emulation in other cities of Gaul. Schools were consequently established at Narbonne, Arles, Vienne, Thoulouse and Autun, which attained a celebrity almost equal to that of Marseilles, and which also furnished men who acquired great reputation in their respective professions, even in the capital of the Roman empire itself.

With respect to the manner in which learning was communicated in the schools above-mentioned, it appears that the student

* Henry's Hist. of G. Brit.; Rankin's Hist. of France; Eden. Ency. art Druid; Cæs. Com.

began with the study of the Greek and Latin grammar, in order that he might speak and write the language fluently. Having made himself acquainted with these, he pursued other elementary studies, a knowledge of which were necessary to form the scholar, but his attention was principally directed to such branches of learning as were considered essential to make an accomplished public speaker. The ancient philosophy of the Greeks was studied with care, as containing a vast fund of useful information on almost every topic; the prevailing systems were those taught by Zeno and his disciples and the philosophers of the middle academy—Aristotle and Epicurus had but few followers.

The schools of Gaul attained so great a reputation, that they were considered as the high roads to honor and power; they multiplied exceedingly, but, at length, shared the fate of all human institutions—from an exalted station from which they promulgated literature and science over a considerable portion of the Roman empire, they sunk into comparative insignificance—from being the seats of learning, they became the abodes of ignorance and superstition. For this decline of learning, various causes have been assigned; the principal, however, may be traced to the civil wars that so frequently raged on the succession of the emperors, and the irruptions of the tribes of barbarians who finally subverted the empire, and overturned the splendid fabric of Roman greatness. The progress of literature was thus so often interrupted, that the attention of men was directed to other objects of more immediate concern; their own personal safety and the preservation of their property, left but little time or inclination for study, hence the schools gradually fell into decay.

The introduction of christianity, as might reasonably have been expected, seeing its influence at the present day, in no way contributed to prevent the downfal of the schools, or to the preservation of learning. This heavenly system was already corrupted by the devices of men, who sought their own aggrandisement by keeping the people in ignorance, and who, on embracing christianity, mingled with the pure precepts of the gospel, the dogmas of the schools to which they had been previously attached. Ignorant themselves, the christian teachers were incapable of restoring learning to its former glory, and until the

reign of Charlemagne, there are but few writers worthy of notice.

Sidonius was a learned man of this period. His father was a tribune and a secretary of state under the emperor Honorius, and afterwards prefect of Gaul. Under the best masters of his time, he went through a regular course of study, and became intimately acquainted with the learning of the times. He early discovered a genius for poetry, which he cultivated to a considerable extent, having written several poems, which were much esteemed in his day, and possess no small share of merit. Sidonius married the daughter of the prefect Avitus, by whom he acquired an estate that rendered him independent, and enabled him to pursue his favorite studies. On the accession of his father-in-law to the imperial throne, he accompanied him to Rome, where he pronounced a glowing panegyric upon him in the presence of the senate. The reign of Avitus lasted but a few months, and Sidonius soon secured to himself the favor of Majorianus and Athenius, his successors; by the latter he was appointed prefect of Rome and created a patrician, and was also admitted among his counsellors. Whilst thus enjoying the favor of the emperor, he was suddenly seized with a religious spirit, and having relinquished his civil offices, he became bishop of Clermont. He soon after abandoned poetry as profane and unbecoming the christian character; he withdrew from the world, became a recluse in his mode of life, and his mind was solely occupied in the contemplation of the mysteries of religion.

As a writer Sidonius occupied a high rank among his contemporaries; "his descriptions are animated and his writings are not destitute of sensibility or judgment. His prose and verse flow smoothly, though there is a considerable want of purity in his language, and of harmony in his periods; there is a quaintness of expression, and a general defect of simplicity in his style. Some parts of his works will admit of comparison with any of the authors of the Augustan age." He published nine books of letters, and began the history of the wars of Attila. He died in the fifty-eighth year of his age.

Fortunatus was born at Poictiers A. D. 530. He was educated at Ravenna, where he pursued with success the prescribed studies, which were limited in their character. Near the close of his life he was made bishop of Poictiers. His genius and

learning are highly extolled by his contemporaries. As a writer he seems to have devoted most of his attention to poetry, to which he was much attached. The principal feature that distinguished his poetical compositions, is an easy and flowing style, which few writers of that period were able to reach. His chief poetical work is a poem on the life of Saint Martin, filled with all the absurdities that a superstitious age could invent, and a credulous mind adopt. He wrote many smaller poems, chiefly on religious subjects, and addressed to different bishops and other clerical men of his time. Among his prose writings the most celebrated is his "Exposition of the Lord's prayer," which is said to be not only "pious and rich in theology, but surpassing all his other prose writings, in purity, perspicuity and precision. It is free from that overflowing stream of words, which being poured forth tumultuously and without arrangement, obscure and embarrass the sense." From his genius and talents Fortunatus was worthy to have flourished in a more refined and literary age.

About this time also flourished *Boethius*. He was born at Rome, and at an early age was sent to Athens to learn the Greek language, and study philosophy. He there prosecuted his studies under the direction of Proclus, a distinguished professor of the eclectic school. On his return to Rome he continued to pursue his studies with unabated ardor, and soon gave proofs of his extensive learning in the various works which he published on different sciences and in defence of the orthodox faith against the host of heretics that beset it. Devoted himself to the study of the sciences, he was anxious to impress his countrymen with a similar devotion; for that purpose he translated, and illustrated by commentaries, the geometry of Euclid, the music by Pythagoras, the arithmetic of Nicomachus, the mechanics of Archimedes, the astronomy of Ptolemy, the theology of Plato and the logic of Aristotle.

Boethius, who possessed the generous and independent spirit of an ancient Roman, by the freedom of his speech offended Theodoric, who threw him into prison, where he was afterwards put to death. During his confinement he composed his celebrated work entitled the "Consolation of Philosophy." This work, which contains a vast treasure of sublime moral sentiments, is written partly in prose and partly in verse, and is thrown into the

form of a conference between the author and philosophy, who endeavors to soothe his afflictions, and prepare him for the last great trial. He begins by complaining of the miserable state to which he is reduced, when his divine instructer, to assuage his distress, reminds him of the instability of fortune, and of the large portion of happiness which he had so long enjoyed. She also reminds him, that although the wicked may enjoy apparent felicity, and the virtuous may be sometimes afflicted, the Deity will equitably judge, and reward and punish them according to their deeds. This work has been frequently translated.

Another distinguished writer of this period was *Gregory of Tours*. He was descended from an illustrious family of Auvergne, and was principally educated under the inspection of an uncle, distinguished for his piety and virtue. Early in life he determined to devote himself to the church, and in order to prepare himself for the responsible duties of his station, he employed much of his time in suitable studies. Being raised to the dignity of bishop of Tours, he preserved a firm and independent course of conduct which gained him the esteem of all, and was frequently consulted by his sovereign on matters of state. He died in the fifty-second year of his age A. D. 595.

The principal work of Gregory which has reached us, is his history of France, in ten books. The first and second book is a mere sketch of the history of the world from the creation to the death of Clovis, A. D. 511. The other eight books contain a more copious narrative of the history of France, from the death of Clovis to the year A. D. 591. Gregory also wrote eight books of the "Lives of the Saints," beginning with the miracles of Christ and his apostles; also a "Commentary on the Psalms" and a "Treatise on Ecclesiastical Offices." The style of Gregory cannot be admired; nor can we place sufficient reliance upon him as an historian, on account of his credulity and that superstition which belonged to the age in which he lived.

With a notice of the French historian *Fredegarius*, and the *venerable Bede*, we shall close our account of distinguished writers between the time of Clovis and Charlemagne. *Fredegarius* flourished about the middle of the seventh century—the place of his birth and his early education are alike unknown. As a French historian he ranks next to Gregory of Tours. His history, like that of Gregory, begins with the creation, and is

brought down to the year A. D. 640. From his own account, he took great care in investigating the subjects which he records, and its accuracy may be generally depended upon. His work has been continued by other hands to the year A. D. 768.

Beda, or the *venerable Bede*, was born at Weremouth, in Northumberland, in the year 672, and acquired the elements of learning in the monastery of St. Peter. Possessing a heart devoted to learning and an uncommon degree of application, he made himself familiar with every branch of literature which could be acquired at that time. He became so celebrated, that his fame reached the ears of *Sergius*, the sovereign pontiff, who invited him to Rome to consult him on subjects of great importance to the church—the temporal aggrandisement of which, then formed one of the prominent objects of the papal court. Bede, however, preferred the retirement of the cloister, and the peaceful pursuit of knowledge, to the bustle of a court. He continued his studies, therefore, with renewed application, and drawing largely from all the stores of ancient learning within his reach, he made himself master of every branch of literature that it was possible for any man to acquire in the age in which he lived. He composed and published many works, the most valuable of which is his "Ecclesiastical History," which is still relied upon by modern historians as a work of high authority. He was held in high estimation for his moral and religious, as well as literary character, and his homilies were appointed to be read publicly in the churches. He was the first who translated parts of the Bible into the language of the country, which was then Saxon. All his other works were composed in the Latin language, in an easy and perspicuous style, but often deficient in purity. He died A. D. 735, and was buried in the monastery at Tarrow; his body, however, was not suffered to remain there, but was removed to Durham, and placed in the same coffin with that of the renowned St. Cuthbert.

After the death of Beda, learning having lost its principal support, rapidly declined in England. William of Malmsbury, one of the earliest and best of the English monkish historians, says, that "the death of Beda was fatal to learning, and particularly to history, in England; insomuch, that it may be said, that almost all knowledge of past events was buried in the same grave with him, and hath continued in that condition even to

our times. There was not so much as one Englishman left behind him, who emulated the glory which he had acquired by his studies, imitated his example, or pursued the path of knowledge he had pointed out. A few indeed of his survivors were good men, and not unlearned; but they generally spent their lives in an inglorious silence; while the far greatest number sunk into sloth and ignorance, until by degress the love of learning was quite extinguished in this island for a long time."*

CHAPTER XVI.

Sketch of the history of the literature of the Arabians, from the time of Mahomet to the expulsion of the Moors from Spain, with a sketch of Spanish literature after that period.

Before we proceed any farther with our sketch of the literature of the European nations, we will attempt a review of the state of literature among the Arabians. We have adopted this plan because, when the christian world was sunk in ignorance, literature among the Arabians was in a high state of cultivation, and because the success of learning among the Arabs of Spain, contributed to its revival in the other kingdoms of Europe.

The Arabians are supposed to be the descendants of Ishmael, and occupied that portion of Asia, known by the several names of Arabia the *Stony*, the *Sandy* and the *Happy*, appellations intended to express the nature of the soil and climate. The former lies adjoining Egypt, and is of a rocky and unfruitful soil; the second extends along the foot of the mountains of Chaldea, and is washed on the north by the Euphrates; it presents to the eye nothing but barren deserts, relieved by fertile spots like islands in the sea, upon which the wandering Arabs pitch their tents and remain until the pasturage is exhausted; the latter, or Arabia the Happy, is surrounded by the Red sea, the Indian

* Rank. Hist. of France; Edin. Ency.; Gib. Rom. Emp.; Millot's Gen. Hist.; Enf. Hist. of Phil.; Mosh. Eccl. Hist.

Ocean, the Persian Gulf, and the Sandy and Stony Arabia. From the fertility of its soil, mild climate and pure air, it acquired the name by which it is distinguished.

The Arabians were divided into two classes; those who dwelt in towns and cities, and carried on the operations of trade and commerce; and those who lived in tents, and led a wandering and unsettled life, like the aborigines of our country—a kind of life still pursued by the Bedowin Arabs. Their religion was originally that known by the name of *Sabianism* or *Zabianism*, or the worship of the heavenly bodies, which they probably derived from the Chaldeans. With regard to this system of religion, we have already had occasion to speak; it is, therefore, unnecessary to repeat what has already been said. This system of star-worship was afterwards changed by the inventions of the priesthood, until their religious system settled into one much less rational, and in the *Caaba* or sacred temple of Mecca, they had no less than three hundred and sixty idols. This sacred temple, until the time of Mahomet, was visited with superstitious veneration every year, by crowds of devout and enthusiastic pilgrims, who resorted thither to present their offerings, kiss the sacred stone, and walk seven times round the sacred edifice that contained the objects of their idolatrous devotion.

The learning of the Arabs before, and some time after, the time of Mahomet, consisted only of a slight knowledge of astronomy, such as could be obtained by observing the appearance of the heavenly bodies, without the aid of instruments, and that species of poetry which was common to almost all rude nations. When the Alcoran was published, they were so utterly ignorant, that even in the district of Yemen, one of the most populous and flourishing of Arabia, not a single person could be found who could read or write Arabic, and the Jews and Christians of the country were distinguished by the title of "the people of the book."

Such was the superstition and ignorance that prevailed in Arabia, that Mahomet, the Arabian prophet and legislator, determined not only to found a new empire, but overturn the prevailing system of idolatry, and establish in its stead, a system, having for its basis the fundamental doctrine, that "there is but one only God." Mahomet was one of those extraordinary men who are only permitted to appear on earth at intervals, to an-

swer some great design of the all-wise Creator. Illiterate and uneducated, but valiant and persevering, and possessing in no inconsiderable degree, that kind of eloquence which is calculated to strike a rude and illiterate people, he succeeded in establishing an empire which continued under fifty-six successive caliphs, and a religion which has spread over almost all the eastern world. Mahomet was not, as many have asserted, of low and obscure parentage, but being a Korashite, he belonged to the noblest tribe of all Arabia, and he thus enjoyed advantages, that to an adventurer of humbler origin, would have been denied. He declared he was commissioned by God to destroy polytheism and idolatry; for this purpose he delivered a new law, known by the name of the koran, or alcoran, the original of which he taught them, was laid up in the archives of heaven, and that the angel Gabriel brought him the copy of it, chapter by chapter, as circumstances rendered it necessary they should be published to the people. The success of Mahomet and his successors in the propogation of the new religion, was rapid beyond example, but was in a great measure occasioned by the terror of their arms. Besides, his religion was artfully adapted to the corrupt nature of man, and the particular manners and opinions of the eastern nations, where its success was most rapid; and the bitter dissentions and cruel animosities, which at that time existed among the different christian sects, rendering the very name of christian odious and contemptible, assisted the propogation of Mahometanism, among many of the nations which were then united with the eastern empire.

Mahomet, as we have observed, was illiterate himself, and he seems to have thought it necessary to keep his followers ignorant of every thing, except what was contained in the koran; for we find that soon after his power was established, he issued an edict, whereby the study of the liberal arts and sciences was declared a capital offence, at the same time proclaiming, that the koran contained every thing that was necessary to be known. Agreeably to this principle, Omar, the third caliph in succession from Mahomet, ordered his general Amrou, to destroy the books in the libraries of Alexandria, that had been accumulating for ages, and contained inestimable treasures of ancient learning. This event took place in the year A. D. 641, and if true, is a strong

proof the contempt of the Arabians for learning, at that period of their history.*

Ali and Moawihah, the fourth and fifth caliphs after Mahomet, extended some protection towards learning and learned men, notwithstanding the edict of Mahomet above-mentioned, but it was not until the accession of Abbas, the founder of the dynasty of the Abbasides, in the 749th year of the christian era, that the light of learning began to spread abroad over the Arabian empire. Abbas himself, in consequence of being involved in wars for the establishment of his throne, did not do much more than open the way for the promotion of literature, by rejecting the absurd notion, that every thing necessary to be known was contained in the koran, and giving his countenance and protection to men of letters. Abbas died in the 30th year of his age, and was succeeded by his brother Al-Manzor, a renowned patron of learning, and from whose reign the Arabian writers date the origin of their literature.

Al-Manzor, as a sovereign, is represented as cruel and implacable, but as a private individual, mild and affable; he greatly contributed to soften and subdue the ferocious character of his subjects, and, in order to instil into them a taste for refined and elegant pleasures and amusements, his attention was directed to the encouragement of the liberal arts and sciences. Al-Manzor removed the seat of empire from Damascus to Bagdad, which, by him and his immediate successors, was quickly embellished with splendid palaces, and in a short time it became the seat of commerce, as well as of literature, science and art. Bagdad, when it became the capital of the caliphate, was the residence of many christians, who were celebrated for their knowledge of medicine and other sciences, some of whom Al-Manzor caused to be introduced into his court, where they soon confirmed his taste for literature and philosophy, and under them, he himself studied astronomy. He offered liberal rewards to those who would translate the works of the Grecian philosophers, in the various branches of learning, many of which were introduced into the empire by the Nestorians and Jews, who had been compelled to fly from the persecution of the orthodox christians of the empire of the east. By this means, the Arabians became

* Prideaux's Life of Mah.; Gibbon's Rom. Emp.

possessed of many of the works of the ancient philosophers, which being translated into Syriac, the vernacular tongue of the people of Bagdad, a knowledge of the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle was so generally diffused, that a taste for literature and a desire of learning was introduced, which rapidly spread under Al-Raschid and Al-Mamon. It is said, that most of the translations thus made by order of Al-Manzor, which are still extant, are very defective, in consequence, no doubt, of their having been translated from the original into Syriac, and afterwards into Arabic.

The seeds of science thus planted by Al-Manzor, grew and flourished under the protection of his more renowned successor Harun Al-Raschid, who ascended the throne A. D. 786. Al-Raschid himself was an enlightened scholar, and applied himself, during his leisure from the cares of government, with great assiduity to the pursuits of literature, under the direction of learned men, who were attracted to his court by his munificence. It is said, that he never undertook a journey without having with him at least one hundred men of science, whose duty it was to preserve whatever they might discover valuable in science. He collected a considerable number of valuable manuscripts, in the Greek, Persian, Chaldean and Egyptian languages, which he caused to be translated into Arabic; but it is much to be regretted, that on account of his partiality for his native language, after the translations were completed, he ordered the originals to be destroyed. He instituted a number of schools, in which philosophy and other branches of useful and ornamental learning were taught, and so much did he differ in his ideas with regard to the diffusion of knowledge, from most of his predecessors, and from the founder of his religion, that he caused schools to be attached to every mosque he erected, so that "whenever the faithful assembled to adore the Deity, they found in his temple an opportunity of rendering him the noblest homage his creatures can pay, by the cultivation of those faculties with which their creator has endowed them." Al-Raschid died A. D. 809. His immediate successor was his eldest son Al-Amin, a prince remarkable for his vices and incapacity, which soon hurled him from the throne to make room for his brother Al-Mamon.

As soon as he had secured himself in power, Al-Mamon, after the example of his father, turned his attention to the cultivation

of learning and the diffusion of knowledge among his subjects, which had met with some interruption during the short, but turbulent reign of Al-Amin. He established an academy at Bagdad, and invited thither the most eminent philosophers, without regard to their religious creeds, observing when spoken to on the danger of subverting the established religion, that he employed them as teachers of learning and science, not of religion. He collected from his subject provinces the most valuable books that could be discovered, and the governors of provinces were directed to collect the literary remains of the conquered countries, in order that they might be preserved for future generations. When he dictated the terms of peace to the Greek emperor, Michael the stammerer, the tribute he demanded, was a collection of Greek authors. Surely a man who could make, at such a time, a demand of a tribute so singular and so unusual, must have been devoted to literature, and demands from the lover of science even more than a mere passing tribute of praise. Al-Mamon was himself celebrated as an astronomer, and was much devoted to the study of that sublime science, which expands the mind by the grand and elevated ideas it unfolds of the wisdom and goodness of the great Creator. To extend the knowledge of astronomical science, he caused to be translated the *Almagest* of Ptolemy, a celebrated geographer and astronomer, who flourished during the reigns of Adrian and the Antonines; this work contained a body of astronomical science, embracing a catalogue of the fixed stars, and a collection of astronomical problems. Like his father, he also caused translations to be made at a great expense, of the most valuable works from the Greek, Persian and other languages into the Arabic, and by thus inspiring his subjects with a love of learning, he softened and refined their manners, and induced a spirit of inquiry, which afterwards spread and illuminated the benighted region of christian Europe. When we look at the present condition of Arabia, and the almost universal ignorance that prevails in the Mahometan world, we would find it difficult to believe, that the Arabians were, at any time, as enlightened as we have represented them, were it not well authenticated by impartial history; and that when the fairest portions of Europe were enveloped in darkness, bigotry and superstition, the empire of Arabia was the seat of science, literature and art.

Al-Mamon was succeeded by Al-Motassem, whose short reign of eight years was more distinguished by the pomp and magnificense he displayed, than any great encouragement he extended to learning and learned men. In 841 he was succeeded by Al-Wathek, who liberally encouraged learned men, particularly those who were skilled in mathematics and astronomy, his favorite sciences. From this period until near the close of the thirteenth century, when the empire of the Arabs, under Al-Motassem II. the last of the Abbassides, yielded to the power of the Turks, learning flourished. The Arabians could enumerate among their literary institutions, schools of great celebrity, to which Christians, as well as the followers of Mahomet resorted; the principal of which were at Bagdad, Bassora and Bochara; at Alexandria and Cairo in Egypt; at Morocco and Fez, in what is now the kingdom of Morocco; and at Cordova and Grenada, in Spain. The college of Bagdad, at the beginning of the twelfth century, was in so flourishing a condition, that it contained six thousand students, and that of Bassora contained nearly as many. These colleges and several others were large and magnificent structures, adorned with the most splendid specimens of art, and furnished with valuable libraries, abounding in works in every department of literature.

Such was the anxiety for distinction and the spirit of emulation that actuated the respective schools, that every department of learning was carefully and assiduously cultivated, nor was the improvement of their language forgotten; to this object the efforts of the two rival schools of Cufa and Bassora, were directed, and with great success. "The Arabian language," says a celebrated orientalist,* "is expressive, strong, sonorous, and the most copious, perhaps, in the world; for, as almost every tribe had many words appropriated to itself, the poets, for the convenience of their measure, or sometimes for their singular beauty, made use of them all, and, as the poems became popular, these words were by degreess incorporated with the whole language, like a number of little streams, which meet together in one channel, and, forming a most plentiful river, flow rapidly into the sea."

Although the literary efforts of the Arabians were directed to various useful and important sciences, they seem to have had a peculiar fondness for poetry, and to have treated their poets

* Sir William Jones. See his essay on the poetry of Eastern nations.

with great respect. The number of Arabian poets, if we may believe those who are skilled in oriental literature, is greater than that of all other nations united. At the beginning of the seventh century, the Arabic language was brought to a high degree of perfection by a sort of poetical academy, that used to assemble at stated times, in a place called *Ocadh*, where every poet produced his best composition, and which was sure to meet with an impartial judgment and the applause it deserved: the best of these poems were transcribed in characters of gold, and hung up in the temple, whence they were named *Modhahebat* or *Golden* and *Moallakat* or *Suspended*. Seven of these ancient poems were suspended on the wall or gate of the Caaba, or Temple of Mecca. The following extracts from the poem of *Amri-olkais*, as translated by Sir William Jones, will serve as specimens of their style of composition. The author gives the following description of his horse:

"Ready in turning, quick in pursuing, bold in advancing, firm in backing; and performing the whole with the strength and swiftness of a vast rock, which a torrent has pushed from its lofty base;"

"A bright bay steed, from whose polished back the trappings slide, as drops of rain glide hastily down the slippery marble."

"Even in his weakest state he seems to boil while he runs; and the sound, which he makes in his rage, is like that of a bubbling chaldron."

"When other horses, that swim through the air, are languid and kick the dust, he rushes on like a flood, and strikes the hard earth with a firm hoof."

"He makes the light youth slide from his seat, and violently shakes the skirts of a heavier and more stubborn rider;"

"Rapid as the pierced wood in the hands of a playful child, which he whirls quickly round with a well fastened cord."

"He has the loins of an antelope, and the thigh of an ostrich; he trots like a wolf, and gallops like a young fox."

"Firm are his haunches; and, when his hinder parts are turned towards you, he fills the space between his legs with a long thick tail, which touches not the ground, and inclines not to either side."

"His back, when he stands in his stall, resembles the smooth stone on which perfumes are mixed for a bride, or the seeds of coloquinteda are bruised."

He thus describes a violent storm of rain and lightning:

"O friend, seest thou the lightning, whose flashes resemble the quick glance of two hands amidst clouds raised above clouds?"

"The fire of its gleams, like the lamps of a hermit, when the oil, poured on them, shakes the cord by which they are suspended."

"I sit gazing at it, while my companions stand between Daaridge and Odhaib; but far distant is the cloud on which my eyes are fixed."

"Its right side seems to pour its rain on the hills of Katan, and its left on the mountains of Sitaar and Zadbul."

"It continues to discharge its waters over Cotaifa till the rushing torrent lays prostrate the groves of Canahbel trees."

"It passes over mount Kenaan, which it deluges in its course, and forces the wild goats to descend from every cliff."

"Oh mount Taima it leaves not one trunk of a palm-tree, nor a single edifice which is not built with well cemented stone."

"Mount Tebier stands in the heights of the flood like a venerable chief wrapped in a striped mantle."

"The summit of Mogaimer, covered with the rubbish which the torrent has rolled down, looks in the morning like the top of a spindle encircled with wool."

"The cloud unloads its freight on the desert of Ghabeit, like a merchant of Yemen alighting with his bales of rich apparel."

"The small birds of the valley warble at daybreak, as if they had taken their early draught of generous wine mixed with spice."

"The beasts of the wood, drowned in the floods of night, float like the roots of wild onions, at the distant edge of the lake."*

The seven poems above-mentioned, were written some time before Mahomet, but how long, is uncertain, and their authors were Amralkeis, Tarafa, Zopeir, Antara, Amru, Hareth and Lebeid. The originals with translations of the whole are preserved in the works of Sir William Jones. Although the extracts above are sufficient to show the style of Arabic poetry, so far as it can be shown by a translation, we cannot refrain from presenting the following beautiful version of a part of the poem of Lebeid, by the above celebrated writer:

But ah! thou know'st not in what youthful play
Our nights, beguil'd with pleasure, swam away;
Gay songs, and cheerful tales, deceiv'd the time,
And circling goblets made a tuneful chime;
Sweet was the draught, and sweet the blooming maid,
Who touch'd her lyre beneath the fragrant shade;
We sip'd till morning purpled ev'ry plain;
The damsels slumbered, but we sipp'd again:
The waking birds that sung on every tree
Their early notes, were not so blithe as we.†

Besides the poems above-mentioned, there are some other collections of Arabic poetry, preserved in European libraries, the most distinguished of which is called *Hamasa*, and contains a number of epigrams, odes and elegies, composed on various occasions; it was compiled by a poet named *Abu Teman*.

In Arabian literature, that species of poetry so early and so

* See the works of Sir William Jones, vol. 10.

† Ibid, vol. 10, p. 343, Essay on the Poetry of the Eastern Nations.

successfully cultivated by the Greeks, namely, dramatic, seems to have been entirely unknown, and, of course, theatrical representations formed no part of their amusements. This kind of entertainment was supplied by the recitation of tales by persons who gained a livelihood by such employments, of which we have still extant many interesting specimens in the "Arabian Night's Entertainments." These tales, decorated with all the beauty and variety of eastern imagery, convey us into fairy regions and bewilder the imagination with the most brilliant descriptions—splendid palaces adorned with diamonds, rubies and emeralds dazzle the eye—gardens loaded with every variety of fruit, and vocal with the music of a thousand birds, captivate the senses, whilst females adorned with every grace and arrayed in matchless beauty, convey us, in imagination, to the gardens of the Houri, the paradise of Mahomet. These tales, of which the "Arabian Nights" form but a small portion, are still recited in the coffee-houses of the east. "The reciter, or story teller, walks to and fro in the middle of the coffee-room, stopping only now and then, when the expression requires some emphatical attitude. He is commonly heard with great attention; and not unfrequently in the midst of some interesting adventure, when the expectation of the audience is raised to the highest pitch, he breaks off abruptly, and makes his escape from the room, leaving both his hero and heroine, and his audience, in the utmost embarrassment. Those who happen to be near the door, endeavor to detain him, insisting on the story being finished before he departs; but he always makes his retreat good, and the audience, suspending their curiosity, are induced to return at the same hour next day to hear the sequel."* "The physicians," says Sismondi, "frequently recommend these story tellers to their patients, in order to soothe pain, to calm agitation, or to produce sleep after long watchfulness; and, accustomed to sickness, they modulate their voices, soften their tones, and gently suspend them, as sleep steals over the sufferer."†

The influence of Arabian learning was very sensibly felt upon the literature and science of Europe, and particularly after the conquest of Spain, when their schools were resorted to by chris-

* See the preface and introductory chapter to Scotts translation of the "Arabian Nights."

† Literature of the South of Europe, p. 38.

tians, who carried back with them many of their peculiar notions in philosophy, which almost insensibly became incorporated with the doctrines of christianity. The influence thus exerted, although it may, in some degree, have added to the corruptions of the christian faith, in the process of time introduced such a love for learning, and such a desire to investigate almost every subject, and elucidate every science, that it opened the way for that flood of light which burst upon the christian world in the fifteenth century.

The reign of Al-Mamon produced several learned and distinguished men, celebrated in the history of Arabian literature; to notice all would greatly exceed the limits of this work; we must, therefore, content ourselves with giving a brief sketch of the most distinguished, among whom was Al-Kendi, a native of Bassora, who attained such distinction among the learned men of his time, as to be called "The Philosopher." He received his earliest instructions in literature in the schools of Bassora, which were afterwards perfected in the more celebrated seminaries of Bagdad, then the resort of the learned under the immediate protection of the commander of the Faithful. As a philosopher, he was devoted to the doctrines of Aristotle, whose writings were his chief study, and much of his time was occupied in explaining and illustrating the peculiar principles of the peripatetic. He was also a mathematician and astronomer of considerable eminence, and his acquirements in medicine, and skill as a physician, were held in high repute. Al-Kendi, in his great zeal to render the principles of philosophy subservient to every useful purpose, attempted the difficult task of reconciling the doctrines of the koran, with the principles of reason, which gave great offence to some of the learned doctors of the Mahometan law, and subjected him to the heavy charges of impiety and heresy. Al-Kendi, however, found means not only to subdue the prejudices and opposition of the principal person opposed to him, but actually became his teacher in that very system of philosophy he had previously condemned and persecuted, so far as he had power.

Al-Farabi, was another celebrated philosopher of the school of Bagdad; he flourished in the tenth century, and acquired so much celebrity, that he attracted the particular notice of his sovereign, who was anxious to load him with honors, which he de-

clined, and devoted himself entirely to the study of philosophy. He was naturally of a gloomy temper, and in a great measure withdrew from the world, leading a solitary and abstemious life. Like all the philosophers of his time, he was a devoted disciple of the peripatetic school, and wrote no less than sixty distinct treatises on the philosophy of Aristotle, which were not only admired by the Arabians, but by the Jews who translated them into Hebrew.

Al-Rasi, Al-Ashari, Abul-Husein and Avicenna, all flourished in the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh. They were all distinguished for their knowledge and skill in the various departments of literature and science. *Al-Rasi* was distinguished as a physician, and wrote many treatises, which were considered very valuable, on medicine and chemistry. *Al-Ashari* was the founder of a new sect among the Mahometans, known by the name of *Asharites*, which became exceedingly popular, and his writings were so much esteemed, that they were read and explained in the schools. *Abul-Husein* was eminent as an astronomer, and is said to be the first who described a celestial planisphere. But few of the Arabian literati attained as high a reputation as Avicenna. This distinguished philosopher and physician, was a native of Bochara, and was born in the year 978. Before he reached his eighteenth year, he was well acquainted with the sciences, with several languages, and was conversant with the Mahometan law. He removed from Bochara to Bagdad, in order, by attending that celebrated school, to become a perfect master of the doctrines of philosophy. He prosecuted his studies with great zeal and industry, but in the pursuit of knowledge, he was influenced by a superstitious feeling, inconsistent with his great reputation. It is related of him, that whenever he was perplexed with any subject, he repaired to the mosque and prayed for divine direction; after which he fancied that all he desired to know was communicated to him in his sleep. He was a voluminous writer, and wrote with great rapidity and ease. He was the author of many works on morals, metaphysics, astronomy and medicine. At twenty-one years of age, he planned and completed a work entitled "The Utility of Utilities," embracing a view of all the sciences, which extended to twenty volumes. Although Avicenna was held in high estimation, and was regarded by his contemporaries as a

luminous, profound and methodical writer, who never touched a subject without adorning it, some modern critics have attempted to snatch the wreath from his brow, and reduce him to a mere compiler without taste or judgment. He died in prison in the 58th year of his age. His imprisonment was occasioned by his refusal, to take off by poison the brother of the Sultan, who was meditating a rebellion.

The last Arabian writer we shall notice until we speak of the Arabs of Spain, is *Al-Gazel*, who flourished in the twelfth century. He was celebrated among the Mahometan doctors for his zeal in defence of Islamism, and his writings against the Jews and Christians. All his zeal in favor of, and his devotion to, the doctrines of Mahomet, did not save him from the charge of heresy, and some of his writings were ordered to be burned. Al-Gazel, after living some years at Bagdad, in the character of teacher, assumed the habit of a pilgrim, and travelled to Mecca, where, after having visited the shrine of the prophet, he travelled through Syria and Egypt, and returned to Bagdad, where he died.

In the year 712, the Arabians (or Saracens, as they were also called,) having made themselves masters of that part of Africa which, at present, includes the empire of Morocco and the kingdoms of Algiers, Tripoli and Tunis, were invited to make a descent upon Spain, by count Julian, whose daughter king Roderic had dishonored, while her father was engaged in the defence of Cueta. At this time Walid was Caliph of Bagdad, and Musa was his lieutenant, or vice-roy of Africa. Musa, after receiving permission of the caliph, despatched a considerable army, under the command of Tarik, a celebrated general, which landed at Gibraltar. Roderic immediately raised an army consisting of ninety thousand men to repel this invasion. Both armies met near Xeres, in Andalusia, where Roderic was defeated and slain, and Spain became, in a few years, subject to the Moors, as the Arabians, or Saracens, were called after they conquered Mauritania.

"They come! they come! I see the groaning lands
White with the turbans of each Arab horde,
Swart Zaarah joins her misbelieving bands,
Allah and Mahomet their battle word
The choice they yield the koran or the sword."

Vision of Don Roderic.

After the battle of Xeres, count Julian recommended to the victorious Tarik, to march directly to the city of Toledo, then the capital of the Gothic monarchy, in order that the christians might not have time to elect a new monarch. Tarik followed his advice—Toledo surrendered to his arms, and in a few months Spain was overran by the Saracens. Musa, on being informed of the success of Tarik, passed over into Spain, at the head of ten thousand Arabs and eight thousand Africans, and completed what his general had so auspiciously commenced. Musa, however, was envious of the fame of Tarik, who had left him so little to do. "Their first interview was cold and formal: a rigid account was exacted of the treasures of Spain; the character of Tarik was exposed to suspicion and obloquy; and the hero was imprisoned, reviled and ignominiously scourged by the hand, or the command, of Musa. Yet so strict was the discipline, so pure the zeal, or so tame the spirit of the primitive moslems, that, after this public indignity, Tarik could serve and be trusted in the reduction of the Tarragonese province."* Musa, in order to secure his conquests, granted to the inhabitants the free exercise of their religion and laws, on condition they would pay the same tribute they paid their former sovereigns. In the treaty between the son of Musa and Theodemir, it was expressly stipulated, that "no injury should be offered to life or property, the wives and children, the religion and temples of christians." Such moderation served, in a great degree, to reconcile the Goths to Arabian rule, and soften the rigors usually attendant upon conquest.

The conquests of Musa were rapid and brilliant, and his ambition prompted him to cross the Pyrenees, and extinguish the kingdoms of the Franks and Lombards. For this purpose he was preparing a powerful army, and he would probably have overrun Europe, had he not been deprived of his command by the caliph, who sent a special messenger, by whom he was arrested in his camp at Lugo in Gallicia. He was conducted to Damascus, then the seat of the caliphate, and after being fined two thousand pieces of gold, he was publicly whipped. He was succeeded in the government of Spain by Abdurrahman, who,

* Gibbon's Rom. Emp. vol. 6, p. 394

having invaded France, was defeated and slain in a battle between Poictiers and Tours, by Charles Martel.

The Emirs or governors of Spain were appointed by, and were dependant upon, the viceroy of Africa, as he was himself on the caliph of Bagdad or Damascus. They were, therefore, more busily employed in levying contributions on the Spaniards, in order to fill their own coffers, than in promoting their comfort and happiness. This state of things continued until A. D. 756, when, the dignity of caliph having passed from the family of the Ommiades to that of the Abbassides, an independent government was established in Spain by Abdurrahman, (called also Almanzor,) a prince of the Ommiades, who escaped that general destruction of his family, which secured the throne of Bagdad to the house of Abbas.

Abdurrahman fixed his residence at Cordova, a city beautifully situated on the northern bank of the Guadalquiver, in a spacious plain, bounded by the mountains of the Sierra Morena. Abdurrahman, who had imbibed a taste for learning, which had made its appearance among the Arabs before the destruction of his family, was celebrated for his munificent protection and encouragement of whatever could contribute to the happiness of his subjects, and the splendor of his reign. He made Cordova the seat of learning, of arts, magnificence and pleasure; by which means he softened and refined the manners, not only of his own countrymen, but of the native Spaniards, who, under the Gothic kings, were rude, illiterate and almost strangers to the gentler passions of our nature. He embellished the city with many splendid edifices, one of which, the present cathedral of Cordova, still remains a monument of Moorish grandeur and magnificence, notwithstanding the many changes it has undergone since it was converted into a christian temple. Although master of nearly the whole of Spain, and at the head of a victorious army, he did not persecute the christians—he rather chose to overturn their religion by other means, similar to those adopted by Julian, the apostate, and which produced a striking effect. By reserving all offices of honor and profit for the followers of the prophet—by promoting marriages between christians and Mahometans, and other strokes of policy, he soon extirpated almost every vestige of christianity in Spain; indeed the followers of Christ were scarcely seen, except in the recesses of the mountains of

Asturias, were Pelagio founded a christian kingdom, which boldly and successfully resisted every attempt of the Moorish Kings. About the beginning of the eleventh century, the race of Abdurrahman became extinct, and the kingdom of Cordova was divided into a number of petty sovereignties.

Cordova continued the principal seat of learning until A. D. 1013, when the royal residence was transferred to Grenada, a city built by the Moors, and in the embellishment of which their kings spared no expense. Of the magnificence of their buildings, the royal palace of the Alhambra still remains a striking and splendid evidence, although now fast hastening to decay. The love of learning became so general, that universities, colleges, and schools were established in almost every city; the most celebrated, however, of these seats of learning, were Cordova and Grenada. In the latter city, in the year 1126, there were two universities, two royal colleges, and a public library, containing many thousand volumes, of the most esteemed and celebrated Greek and Arabic writers—literary foundations of more value than existed in the whole of christian Europe at that period. At this time, which may be considered as the period when Spanish literature attained its zenith, there were established in the several cities of the kingdom, about seventy public libraries, containing upwards of six hundred thousand volumes—an immense number, when we remember that the art of printing being then unknown, books were all in manuscript, a tedious and expensive process for the preservation of the results of human learning. The Arabian writers enumerate a vast number of authors who were eminently distinguished for their great attainments, and although their pride and national vanity may have induced them to swell the list, it will be acknowledged by all who have looked into the subject, that they excelled in almost every branch of learning and science, whilst the rest of the world were sunk in mental barbarism. To their zeal in the sacred cause of learning we are indebted for the preservation of many ancient writers, whose works would otherwise have been lost; so little were they prized by their christian neighbors, and so ignorant were they of their real value, that the most valuable treatises were frequently erased to make room for the legend of some saintly impostor. To such distinction did the schools of Cordova and Grenada attain among the christians of Europe,

that Catholic bishops resorted thither to attend the lectures and instructions of Mahometan doctors.

If we look only to the present ignorant, enslaved and degraded condition of the followers of Mahomet, and the present "high and palmy" state of literature in the Christian world, we may find it difficult to reconcile the intellectual superiority to which the former attained, under the auspices of the Abbassides in Arabia, and Ommiades in Spain. But the wonder ceases when we turn over the pages of history, and compare these monarchs with the Christian rulers of Europe, and we sigh when we contemplate the contrast. The caliphs of Bagdad and the Moorish kings of Spain, of the dynasties alluded to, were, in general, learned, liberal and enlightened; enjoying the benefit of learning themselves, they were enabled to appreciate its blessings, and its salutary effects upon the human mind, they had, therefore, no fear of its injurious influence when generally diffused among their subjects, but rather rejoiced in its dissemination. The Potentates of christian Europe, although surrounded with the emblems of royalty, were "rude in manners and in speech," and delighted only in scenes of war and rapine.

> Beneath their battlements, within their walls,
> Power dwelt amidst her passions; in proud state
> Each robber chief upheld his armed halls,
> Doing his evil will, nor less elate
> Than mightier heroes of a longer date.
>
> *Lord Byron.*

They were under the complete control of an ambitious and profligate clergy, who, seeking only to extend their own power and influence, had usurped almost all the prerogatives of government; instead of leading the minds of men in the ways of truth and righteousness, they were usually found in the courts of princes promoting and encouraging, almost every species of crime; they appeared more like the emissaries of the prince of darkness, than the meek and humble followers of the lamb of God; they were interested in keeping up this general ignorance, because, in the diffusion of knowledge, they saw the certain downfal of their power and influence. To the influence of the clergy, therefore, may be mainly attributed the low and degraded state of learning throughout christian Europe, at the time it flourished among the Arabians.

The Moorish kingdoms of Spain were equally prolific in ingenious and intelligent authors, as the empire of Arabia, a few of whom we will notice. *Avenpace*, who flourished in the twelfth century, wrote a commentary upon Euclid; he was intimately acquainted with the philosophy of Aristotle, but applying it to the explanation of the koran, he was suspected of heresy and was thrown into prison. *Avenzoar*, was a native of Seville, and was celebrated for his skill in the practice of medicine, and the improvements he introduced into the science. Amongst the most learned and celebrated of the Spanish-Arabian writers of the age in which he lived, was *Averroes*, who was born about the middle of the twelfth century, of a noble family of Cordova. He was instructed at an early age in the law of the prophet, to which he added a knowledge of the Aristotelian philosophy, a favorite study, as before remarked, with the Arabian philosophers. Under Avenzoar he studied medicine, and under competent teachers made himself master of mathematics. In consequence of his learning and talents, he was advanced to high and important offices, which he filled with honor. His rapid advancement and extraordinary fame, induced his rivals to charge him with heresy, and in order to prove the charge, they engaged several young persons to receive instructions from him in philosophy. These young men took minutes of every opinion advanced by their preceptor, which appeared to contradict the doctrines of Mahomet, and thus the charge of heresy being proven, he was commanded in future to reside among the Jews, and his goods were confiscated. After undergoing a variety of persecutions, Averroes removed to Morocco, where he died about the close of the twelfth century. He was highly celebrated for his personal virtues, and practised the most rigid temperance. He spent large sums in liberal donations to learned men, without making any distinction between his friends and his enemies; for which his apology was, that in giving to his friends and relations, he only followed the dictates of nature; but in giving to his enemies, he obeyed the command of virtue. *Averroes* was a voluminous writer, and his pen was employed on a variety of subjects. As the philosophy of Aristotle was the favorite system, he partook of the enthusiasm of the age, and much of his time was employed in writing commentaries upon the works of the peripatetic, which he regarded as "so perfect, that none of

his followers, through a space of fifteen hundred years, were able to make the smallest improvement upon them, or to discover the least error in them; a degree of perfection, truly miraculous, that proved him to have been rather a divine than a human being." So exalted was his admiration of Aristotle, that he says of him, "that he was created and given to the world, by Divine Providence, that we might see in him, how much it was possible for man to know." The extravagant opinion entertained by Averroes, with regard to Aristotle and his philosophy, was common to all the Arabian writers, particularly those who had any pretensions to the character of philosophers; they looked upon him as one to whom all the secrets of nature had been laid open, and who alone was capable of explaining its mysteries; and he who was most conversant with his writings was regarded as the ablest philosopher.

Although philosophy was a favorite study with the Arabians, their researches extended to other subjects, and if we are not indebted to them for the discovery of certain sciences, we owe to their zeal and intelligence many important improvements. The natural sciences were pursued with considerable ardor; to mineralogy and botany, two interesting branches of natural history, several Arabian naturalists, devoted great part of their lives, collecting specimens and describing their various properties; their descriptions, however, were not so minute and particular as modern science requires, nor was the classical arrangement of the different subjects, so plain and intelligible, as that of modern naturalists. What they wanted in knowledge they made up in zeal, and they thus opened the ways of science which have been successfully followed by the learned of later times. To the Arabians we are indebted for many important discoveries in the useful and instructive science of chemistry—a science which is daily [illegible] upon the most sublime views of the operations of nature, and unveloping and explaining facts which, without its aid, would be inexplicable. Besides the advantages in science we have derived from them, we are indebted to their skill and ingenuity, for many useful and important inventions. Of these inventions it is unnecessary to make any precise enumeration in this place.

Whilst we feel and acknowledge the influence of Arabian learning, in introducing that revival of letters in the fifteenth cen-

tury, which has shed such a brilliant light over the world, in the language of the eloquent Sismondi we ask, "What remains of so much glory? Not more than five or six individuals are in a situation to take advantage of the manuscript treasures which are enclosed in the library of the Escurial. The boundless regions where Islamism reigned, and still continues to reign, are now dead to the interests of science. The rich countries of Fez and Morocco, illustrious for five centuries, by the number of their academies, their universities and their libraries, are now only deserts of burning sand, which the human tyrant disputes with the beast of prey. The smiling and fertile shores of Mauritania, where commerce, arts and agriculture attained their highest prosperity, are now the retreats of corsairs. Egypt has, by degrees, been swallowed up by the sands which formerly fertilized it. Syria and Palestine are desolated by the wandering Bedowins, less terrible still than the Pacha who oppresses them. Bagdad, formerly the residence of luxury, of power and of knowledge, is a heap of ruins. The celebrated universities of Cufa and Bassora are extinct. The prodigious literary riches of the Arabians, no longer exist in any of the countries where the Arabians and Musselmen rule. It is not there we must seek, either for the fame of their great men, or for their writings. What have been preserved are in the hands of their enemies, in the convents of the monks, or in the royal libraries of Europe. And yet these vast countries have not been conquered. It is not the stranger who has despoiled them of their riches, who has annihilated their population, and destroyed their laws, their manners and their national spirit. The poison was their own; it was administered by themselves, and the result has been their own destruction."*

To the defeat of Almanzor A. D. 998—the extinction of the race of Abdurrahman, in the beginning of the eleventh century, and the consequent division of the kingdom of Cordova into separate sovereignties, the downfal of the Moorish power in Spain may be ascribed, although the Moors were not finally conquered until A. D. 1492, when the city of Granada, the last hold of Moorish power, fell before the united arms of Ferdinand and Isabella, the sovereigns of Castile and Leon. This conquest terminated the contests between the Moors and Christians in Spain,

* Sismondi's Lit. of the South of Eu. vol. 1, p. 43.

which had existed upwards of seven hundred years. The long dominion of the Arabs, the intermarriages of the proudest families of the Visigoths, with their Arabian conquerors, and the consequent union of interests, must, of necessity, have exercised an extensive influence, not only upon the relations of life, but upon the religion, the language and the literature of Spain. The language of Spain, as spoken during the rule of the Visigoths, was a mixture of the German with the Latin; this remark, however, must be considered as applying generally, as some of the provinces spoke a different dialect. After the conquest of Spain by the Arabs, the language was enriched by the introduction and adoption of many Arabic words, which increased its energy and copiousness. The influence of Arabian upon Spanish literature, was felt and acknowledged long after the expulsion of the Moors, more particularly in their ballads and their love songs, which were distinguished for that simplicity of language and tenderness of feeling that marked the early poets of Arabia.

The earliest Spanish poem of celebrity, of which we have any account, is the "Cid;" there are, however, many minor pieces extant of an earlier date, consisting principally of songs and ballads. The "Cid" is regarded as the national poem of the Spaniards, and was written about the middle of the twelfth century. It is founded upon the warlike exploits of Don Roderigo Laynes, sirnamed the *Cid*, who eminently distinguished himself in the wars between the Christians and Moors, in the eleventh century. Although the language of the poet is far from being refined, or elegant, and seldom rises above that of a barbarous chronicler, he relates the incidents of his hero's life with great fidelity, not even omitting or extenuating such as place his character, at least for morality, in no very elevated light. In addition to the information we collect, with regard to the history of the times, we learn something of the manners and customs of the age. The following extracts will serve as a specimen of this celebrated poem.

The Cid, at the solicitation of the king, had married his two daughters, Donna Elvira and Donna Sol, to Don Diego and Don Ferdinand, sons of Gonzales, count of Carion, who proved themselves unworthy of such an alliance. Having espoused the daughters of the Cid from avaricious motives, they determined

to rid themselves of them on their journey to their own castles. Arriving at the forest of Corpes, they resolved to put their bloody design into execution:

The mountains there are high, and the branches seem'd to rest
Upon the clouds, and wild beasts did the travellers molest.
They found a pleasant orchard, through which a streamlet went,
And there they presently resolved that they would pitch their tent;
That by them and those they brought with them the night might there be spent.
They press'd their ladies to their hearts, with the words which love affords;
But when the morning came, it seem'd they had forgot those words.
Orders were given by them to load their baggage—a rich store;
The tent in which that night they slept was folded up once more!
And the servants who had care of them had all push'd on before.
The Infants so had order'd it, that no one should remain,
Excepting Donna Elvira and Donna Sol, their wives twain.

The Infants then took their bridle reins and lashed their wives until the blood started from the wounds, and falling senseless on the ground, their cruel and unfeeling husbands, supposing them dead, left them and proceeded on their journey. Fortunately, Felez Munos, whom the Cid had directed to accompany his daughters, discovered their situation, and having restored them to their senses, conducted them to a place of safety. The Cid on being informed of the treatment his daughters had received at the hands of their husbands, demanded of the king, that the outrage should be judged by the cortes of the kingdom. The king grants his request, and the Cid having recovered two swords he had presented his sons-in-law, and the dowry of his daughters, he thus addresses the king:

Justice and Mercy, my lord the king, I beseech you of your grace!
I have a grievance left behind, which nothing can efface.
Let all men present in the court attend and judge the case,
Listen to what these courts have done and pity my disgrace.
Dishonor'd as I am, I cannot be so base
But here before I leave them, to defy them to their face.
Say, Infants, how had I deserv'd, in earnest or in jest,
Or on whatever plea you can defend it best,
That you should rend and tear the heartstrings of my breast?
I gave you at Valencia my daughters in your hand,
I gave you wealth and honors, and treasure at command:
Had you been weary of them, to cover your neglect,
You might have left them with me, in honor and respect.
Why did you take them from me, Dogs and Traitors as you were?
In the forest of Corpes, why did you strip them bare?
Why did you mangle them with whips? why did you leave them bare
To the vultures and the wolves, and to the wintry air?
The court will hear your answer, and judge what you have done,
I say your name and honor henceforth is lost and gone.

The king decides that the matter shall be settled by combat between the Infants of Carion and the champions of the Cid on the following day, but the Infants demand three weeks to prepare themselves, which is granted. At the time appointed, the combatants meet, and having entered the lists, the combat ensues, which is thus described:

The heralds and the king are foremost in the place,
They clear away the people from the middle space:
They measure out the lists, the barriers they fix:
They point them out in order, and explain to all the six:
"If you are forc'd beyond the line where they are fix'd and trac'd,
You shall be held as conquer'd and beaten and disgrac'd."
Six lances length on either side an open space is laid,
They share the field between them, the sunshine and the shade.
Their office is performed, and from the middle space
The heralds are withdrawn, and leave them face to face,
Here stood the warriors of the Cid, that noble champion
Opposite on the other side, the Lords of Carion,
Earnestly their minds are fix'd each upon his foe;
Face to face they take their place, anon the trumpets blow:
They stir their horses with the spur, they lay their lances low,
They bend their shields before their breasts, their faces to the saddle bow.
Earnestly their minds are fix'd each upon his foe.
The heavens are overcast above, the earth trembles below,
The people stand in silence gazing on the show;
Bermues the first challenger, first in combat clos'd,
He met Ferran Gonzales, face to face oppos'd;
They rush together with such rage that all men count them dead,
They strike each other on the shield, without all fear or dread.
Ferran Gonzales with his lance pierce'd the shield outright,
It pass'd Bermues on the left side, in his flesh it did not bite,
The spear was snapp'd in twain, Bermues sat upright,
He neither flinch'd nor swerv'd like a true steadfast knight.
A good stroke he received, but a better he has given;
He struck the shield upon the boss, in sunder it is riven,
Onward into Ferran's breast the lance's point is driven,
Full upon his breast plate, nothing would avail,
Two breast plates Fernando wore and a coat of mail:
The two are riven in sunder, the third stood him in stead
The mail sunk in his breast, the mail and the spear head
The blood burst from his mouth that all men thought him dead.
The blow has broken his girdle and his saddle girth,
It has taken him over his horse's back, and born him to the earth.
The people think him dead as he lies on the sand;
Bermues left his lance and took his sword in hand.
Ferran Gonzales knew the blade which he had worn of old,
Before the blow came down, he yielded and cried, "hold!"
Antolines and Diego encounter'd man for man,
Their spears were shiver'd with the shock, so eagerly they ran
Antolines drew forth the blade which Diego once had worn,
Eagerly he aimed the blow for the vengeance he had sworn.

Right through Diego's helm the blade its edge has borne,
The crest and helm are lopt away, the coif and hair are shorn,
He stood astounded with the stroke, trembling and forlorn,
He waved his sword above his head, he made a piteous cry,
"O save me from that blade, Almighty Lord on high!"
Antolines came fiercely on to reach the fatal stroke,
Diego's courser rear'd upright, and through the barrier broke.
Antolines has won the day, though his blow was miss'd
He has driven Diego from the field, and stands within the list.

The heralds proclaim that the champions of the Cid have conquered, and the injuries inflicted upon his daughters avenged.* The exploits of the Cid formed the subject of numerous ballads and romances, by Spanish writers, and the tragedy of the Cid, by Corneille, is one of the noblest in the French language.

In the thirteenth century flourished Gonzales de Berceo. He was a monk of the monastery of St. Millan, where he passed the greater part of his life, and he became strongly impressed with that peculiar feeling and mode of thinking that belonged to the monks of his age. He was a poet; nine of his poems have been preserved, all of which treat on sacred subjects, and the miracles attributed to saints. As a poet he was equally careless, common-place and dull, and his works shew that the inspirations of nature were banished from the cells of monasteries.

A distinguished writer of the thirteenth century, was Alphonzo X, king of Castile. He was a great patron of letters, and invited to his court many of the philosophers and learned men of the east, whose works he caused to be translated into the Castilian. He caused a general history of Spain to be composed in the Castilian language—he prohibited the use of Latin in law proceedings, and directed them to be carried on in the language of the country—he compiled and published that code of Spanish law known by the name of *Las Partidas*. He was celebrated as an astronomer, and in order to improve the science, invited, from all parts of Europe, persons who were skilled in it, and employed them in correcting the astronomical tables of Ptolemy. He composed a variety of treatises on various subjects, besides several poems, one of which "The Book of Leisure," is an exposition of the secrets of alchymy, written in a manner that renders it totally unintelligible. His zeal in the cause of literature and

* Sismondi's Lit. of the South of Eur., vol. 2.

his own writings contributed in a considerable degree to the progress of knowledge, and on that account is worthy the remembrance of posterity.

In the fourteenth century flourished Prince Don Juan Manual. He was alike distinguished for his bravery and his talents as a general, as for his learning and genius. As a writer, his principal work is "*Count Lucanor*," a collection of novels or tales, designed to convey instruction not only in morals but in politics. He sometimes laid aside the gravity of the statesman and moralist, and indulged himself in the composition of romances and love verses, which were written in that natural style that affects the heart and interests the feelings.

Contemporary with Prince Juan, was *Vasco de Lobeira*, the author of Amadis de Gaul, the most celebrated of the romances of the age of chivalry. He flourished in the beginning of the fourteenth century. The Amadis of Gaul is said to have been borrowed from the works of the French writers of the twelfth century. Although the scene is laid in France, and the hero never enters Spain, or engages in any adventures with the Moors, the contests with whom possessed the highest interest for every Spaniard, yet it became the favorite romance of the Spaniards, and was read with an avidity and enthusiasm, excited by few other works of a similar character. This work is easy and graceful in the narrative, and full of that animation and gaiety which render such works interesting. It breathes an amiable spirit of gallantry without that insipidity which characterizes love stories, and is remarkable for a chastity of expression which adds new grace to the images of voluptuousness.* This celebrated romance was imitated in a variety of works, which were held in the highest repute. They were sung by soldiers on their march, by the rustics in their daily labors, and by the women during their domestic occupations.

On the revival of learning, Spain produced several writers in the various walks of literature and science, who would do honor to any nation, particularly during the reign of Charles V, when she could boast of an Almagaver and Garcilaso de la Vega, distinguished as poets, and Hurtado de Mendoza, distin-

* Cours de la Lit. tome 13, p. 368; Sis. Lit. of the South of Eu. vol. 2, p. 112.

guished as a poet and prose writer. A further notice of them does not come within the plan of the present work.

CHAPTER XVII.

History of literature from the accession of Charlemagne to the beginning of the eleventh century.

CHARLEMAGNE was the wonder of his age, the most extraordinary man who had appeared for many centuries. Endowed by nature with talents of a superior order, he projected and executed enterprises that elevated him to the highest rank among earthly potentates, and his empire to the highest pitch of glory. His vices, which we are constrained to acknowledge were many, may be attributed to the rude and uncultivated manners of the times, and the looseness of morals which then prevailed, rather than to a natural depravity of heart, or attachment to vicious indulgences. The restraints of religion were not then so efficacious as in modern times; its principles and directions were but imperfectly understood; the best christian was he who best supported the interests of the clergy. The virtues which Charlemagne often displayed in public and private life; the zeal he manifested for the good of his subjects and the prosperity of his empire, ought, like charity, to cover the vices with which contemporaneous history has stained his character. By the power of his genius alone, he was enabled to unite the discordant parts of his vast empire, and keep his nobles in subjection, who, in those turbulent times, were continually inclined to revolt. "In the history of the times," says the historian of the middle ages, "he stands alone like a beacon upon a waste, or a rock in the broad ocean. His sceptre was the bow of Ulysses, which could not be drawn by any weaker hand. His reign a solitary resting place between two long periods of turbulence and anarchy, deriving the advantages of contrast, both from those of the preced-

ing dynasty and of posterity, for whom he had formed an empire, which they were unworthy and unequal to sustain."* Charlemagne appears to much greater advantage, when compared with the greater number of his predecessors, from the time of Clovis, the founder of the French monarchy, after whose demise, with few exceptions, the kings of France were totally unworthy of the high stations they occupied. Ignorant, superstitious, and directed and controlled in every thing, whether relating to church or state, by an aspiring and ambitious priesthood, they were incapable of accomplishing any thing, either for their personal or for the national glory; indeed, so much had they degenerated from the parent stock, that after Cloitaire II, the great grandson of Clovis, they were distinguished by the name of *insensati*, or idiots, and the royal power was exercised by the mayors of the palace. The turbulent and unsettled condition of the country, the internal commotions and contests for empire, and their almost continual wars with the Saracens of Spain, and with other neighboring nations, left the kings of France but little leisure, had they even possessed the taste and inclination to cultivate the seeds of science and nourish the plant of literature. It was reserved for Charlemagne, whose conquering sword, and firmly rooted power, had established peace at home, to set an example, as a patron of literature, worthy to be followed by his successors.

The early years of Charlemagne are said to have been passed after the manner of the youth of those times, in military and other manly exercises and amusements; he paid but little attention to learning, until he was about thirty years of age, when, being struck with his importance, he invited to his court *Alcuin*, an Englishman celebrated for his extensive acquirements, and deservedly so, for the age in which he lived. Under Egbert, archbishop of York, Alcuin acquired a knowledge of the Latin, Greek and Hebrew languages, and also considerable knowledge of mathematics and other branches of science then taught. His arrival in France introduced a new era in her literary history. He became the instructer of the emperor himself in the various sciences then known and taught, in which he soon acquired considerable knowledge; he also made himself perfect master

* Hallam's view of the Middle Ages, vol. I.

of the Latin language, and attained such a knowledge of the Greek, as to be able to read it—a rare accomplishment even among the higher clergy. He was so assiduous in the prosecution of his studies, that in addition to the acquirements above-mentioned, he was able to converse with foreign ambassadors in Arabic, Scotch, German and English. Charlemagne collected about his person all such as were distinguished for learning, and established in his palace an academy, or literary society, composed principally of ecclesiastics. Of this academy or society, he was himself a member. At its meetings, those subjects which constituted the chief learning of the times were discussed, and as Charlemagne valued himself on his great skill in theology, the discussion of subjects connected therewith, occupied a considerable portion of their time. The discussion of points of doctrine, although of itself, not very well calculated to promote general literature, in this particular instance had, no doubt, a considerable influence in extending knowledge, as it induced those concerned in the discussion, to examine more minutely, the grounds of their respective opinions, and by thus instituting a spirit of inquiry, led them sometimes to enter the more expanded field of science.

Charlemagne established schools, academies and universities in various parts of his empire, particularly at Paris, Tours and Soissons, and rewarded Alcuin with princely munificence. He conferred upon him three abbeys of great value, the lands attached to which, contained a population of twenty thousand souls, all contributing to support the splendor and dignity of this powerful abbot. This unexampled liberality, on the part of the emperor, affords conclusive proof, if other proofs were wanting, of his disposition to encourage learned men, and extend the benefits of learning.

As Alcuin, under the patronage of Charlemagne, may be considered as the restorer of learning in France, some of our readers may be curious to know something of the plan of education recommended by him. Great attention to orthography and pronunciation, which had been previously much neglected, was first recommended to the pupil; he was then instructed, in succession, in grammar, dialectics, rhetoric and the higher branches of philosophy; this constituted the whole course of study, and was communicated in Latin, the language of the learned, in

which all the works of the times were composed. The mode of instruction adopted by Alcuin, and which was probably followed in all the schools, appears to have been catechetical, as the best means of making a lasting impression. The following extract from his "Treatise on Dialectics," will serve as a specimen of his manner. It purports to be a dialogue between Charlemagne and Alcuin:

Charlemagne. Into how many parts is philosophy divided?

Alcuin. Into three, viz. physics, ethics and logic.

C. Express these in Latin phrase.

A. Physics is natural philosophy; ethics is moral philosophy, and logic is rational philosophy, or the art of reasoning.

C. Explain their meaning more fully.

A. Physics is the investigation of natural causes; ethics, of the principles and conduct of life; logic, the principles or method of understanding.

C. Into how many parts are physics divided?

A. Into four—arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy.

C. Into how many parts are ethics divided?

A. Into four also, viz. prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.

C. Into how many parts is logic divided?

A. Into two—dialectics and rhetoric.

C. What is dialectics?

A. It is the art of inquiring, of defining and of disputing or arguing.

C. What is the difference between dialectic and rhetoric?

A. The same difference as between a closed and an open hand. The former contracts, the latter copiously enlarges the subject; the one is more acute to invent, the other more eloquent to address and persuade; the first requires retirement and study, the second an audience; it may be one or more persons, or a crowded assembly.

Although Charlemagne established schools and encouraged learned men by his liberality, literature did not make that progress throughout his empire, that might have been expected. His efforts were directed to this great end with a praiseworthy perseverance, but neither his power nor his example, could overcome the barbarism of the times, and inspire his nobles with a love of literature. Could they have been induced to have seconded his generous design, and encouraged learning among their vassals, we might have beheld it throwing aside the shackles which had so long bound it to the earth, and springing into vigorous existence.

The state and condition of learning will be best understood by mentioning some of the literary foundations of Charlemagne, and the different branches of science taught in them. Primary schools were established in different parishes for the instruction of children. These schools were under the direction of the

curates, whose learning seldom extended beyond reading the Lord's prayer in Latin; of course, the amount of instruction there received was very limited. After learning the alphabet, the children were taught to read the psalter and commit it to memory. This constituted the whole course of instruction in the primary schools, beyond which a great proportion of the pupils never advanced. Next to these, schools were attached to cathedrals and monasteries, intended for the education of those designed for the church, in which the course of study was more extended. In these schools were taught grammar, rhetoric and church music—the latter then considered an important branch of the education of a priest. Lastly, the universities or colleges; these were established at Paris, Soissons, Tours and other cities, where the system of instruction was still more ample, and the course of study more extensive, which embraced what was then called the *Trivium* and the *Quadrivium*. The *Trivium* included grammar, rhetoric and dialectics; the *Quadrivium*, music, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy. He who was master of these several sciences, was thought to possess every qualification necessary for the complete investigation of every department of human knowledge, and was esteemed a philosopher. Although these institutions of learning were opened to all who chose to enter their portals in search of knowledge, but few availed themselves of the advantages they offered, except those who were destined for the church. The nobles devoted to war and warlike amusements and exercises, thought themselves degraded by the pursuits of learning. They were content to hear a minstrel recite the exploits of their warlike progenitors, or a monk relate the legendary story of their patron saints. The inferior laity were equally careless and indifferent on the subject of learning, which indifference and carelessness, were encouraged by the monks and clergy, who had no inclination to foster and protect institutions which would awaken a spirit of inquiry, or have a tendency to diminish their influence. How different from the conduct of the more enlightened clergy of the present day, whose mental energies are devoted to the diffusion of knowledge as the most effectual means of propogating that gospel, of which they are the ministers! This pernicious policy of the clergy of keeping the people in ignorance of every thing but what they thought proper to teach, so generally

prevailed, that, notwithstanding the expressed wishes of the emperor, literature and science were but little known beyond the walls of the cloister. Yet, these very monks and clergy exhibit to the world the singular fact, of being at once the preservers and the enemies of learning. They were its enemies because, actuated by a selfish policy, they used their influence to prevent its extension beyond the circle of their own body—its preservers, because, although unable to comprehend or appreciate, the literary treasures they possessed, their monasteries were the depositaries of some of the most valuable works of the ancient poets, philosophers and historians of Greece and Rome.

At this period the art of writing had arrived at greater perfection than any other branch of education. The copying of manuscripts was one of the principal occupations of the monks, in the retirement of their cloisters, and while they conferred a benefit upon posterity, by their labors in transcribing the works of ancient authors, the employment afforded some relief to their monotonous course of life. Their breviaries, the legends of their saints and other religious books, were written with peculiar beauty in letters of gold, and in ink of various colors. The margins and the heads of the chapters were often adorned with delicately executed drawings, and not unfrequently with the miniatures of those fair dames who graced the halls of baronial castles, and whose presence softened the rude manners of the times. Many of these illuminated volumes are still carefully preserved in the public and private libraries of Europe, as monuments of the skill and patience of the monks.

Among the writers of this era, we must rank *Charlemagne* himself. He was not a voluminous author, but his writings entitle him to high commendation, particularly when we remember the age in which he lived, the time of life at which he began his literary pursuits, and the multiplicity of concerns that engaged his attention. His "*Capitularies*," or the body of laws drawn up and published during his reign, were, probably, produced by the united labor of himself and his counsellors, but his letters and poetical effusions, are less equivocal testimonies of his abilities. His letters were numerous, and were principally addressed to the clergy, or his public officers. They are written in an easy style, not unworthy brighter periods of literature, in some of which he expresses an anxious desire for the diffusion of

learning, and a laudable spirit for inquiry. He was a great admirer of the muses, and sometimes paid his devotions at their altar. Several of his poems have been preserved, one of which addressed to Winifrede, a monk of Cassin, and the author of a history of the Lombards, we will offer as a specimen of his style of composition, and his poetical genius:

Hinc celer egrediens celeri mea charta volatu,
Per sylvas, colles, valles quoque præpete cursu,
Alma Deo chari Benedicte tecta require,
Est nam certa quies fessis venientibus illuc;
Hic olus hospitibus; piscis, hic panis abundat,
Pax pia, mens humilis, pulchra et concordia fratrum.
Laus, amor, et cultus Christi simul omnibus horis;
Die Patri, et sociis cunctis, salvete valete.
Colla mei Pauli guadendo amplecte benigne,
Dicito multoties, salve Pater optime. Salve.

Go swift my card, o'er hills and valleys fly,
Surpass the wind, to equal thought go, try;
Enter the holy mansion of my Paul,
His hospitable welcome 's known to all:
There you may rest, and there the gen'rous mind
Contemplate of my pious, learned friend;
Humble, though eminent amidst the throng
Of monks, who all to Mount Cassin belong,
And soon as matins cease these lines present,
They show how much on him my mind is bent.
Salute him much, salute the brethren all,
But chief and oft salute the noble Paul.

One of the most learned men and principal literary ornaments of the court of Charlemagne, and of his empire, was *Eginhard*, his son-in-law and secretary. He was a native of Germany, but the place of his birth is unknown. Early in life he visited the French court, where he received his education, as appears from the preface to the "Life of Charlemagne," wherein he says, that he was induced to engage in the work, because of the obligations he was under to the emperor for his education. He enjoyed so much of the esteem and confidence of Charlemagne, that he not only made him his secretary, but gave him his daughter Imma in marriage, and appointed him to the lucrative office of superintendent of public buildings. The principal writings of Eginhard are his "Life of Charlemagne" and his "Annals," to which we are principally indebted for the information we possess, relative to the life and character of the extraordinary personage whose reign they commemorate. His "Annals" contains

the history of France, from the year 741 to A. D. 829, embracing the reigns of Pepin, Charlemagne, and part of that of Louis, and is composed with a degree of judgment and discrimination greatly exceeding the other works of the times of a similar character. His "Life of Charlemagne," contains the private and domestic history of that monarch, in which he enters into a minute account of his character, as the head of a family and a private man. He also gives a brief account of his wars and conquests, and the many useful public works he caused to be erected. In most of the transactions he describes, he professes to have been either personally engaged, or an eye witness of the manner in which they were conducted. As a writer, Eginhard is acknowledged to have been much superior to any of his age, particularly in historical composition, and his letters are remarkable for purity and perspicuity of style. His wife died A. D. 837, and he seems to have deeply lamented her loss; he himself died A. D. 839, and was buried in the church of the monastery of Selgenstadt in Germany.

Had the successors of Charlemagne possessed equal abilities, with the same energy and decision of character, the seeds of science he had sown, might have brought forth good fruit; but his sceptre unfortunately fell into hands too feeble to wield it. His son and successor, Louis le Debonnaire, was a generous but superstitious prince, and soon fell a victim to his father's imprudent policy of dividing his empire between his three sons, and to the machinations of the clergy who sought to establish a right to dethrone kings at pleasure. Louis, however, had imbibed something of the spirit of his father with regard to literature, and was well disposed to advance its interests, and, had his reign been less turbulent, his generous efforts might have resulted in something beneficial. Charlemagne in his own person had overcome the prejudices of the age, that confined the pursuits of learning almost exclusively to the cloister, and had done much to promote the cause of science, but his example made but little impression upon his successors. In addition to a disinclination on their part to undergo the fatigues of study, the disorder of the state, the almost continual revolts and contests for sovereignty, during the government of the Carlovingean race, contributed in a great degree, as such a state of things ever will, to retard and check the general diffusion of knowledge. In these boiste-

rous and troublesome times, even the monasteries, heretofore generally regarded as sanctuaries, were violated—they were invaded by the din of arms, and the war-cry echoed from cloister to cloister. In the destruction of these houses of religious retirement, many valuable libraries, rich in ancient manuscripts, were burnt or otherwise destroyed, to the great loss of after times. In such a state of society, when almost every political and social tie was severed, when the retreats of learning were broken up, and when war was the almost exclusive occupation of all classes, it is not to be expected that literature would flourish. "In circumstances so adverse to study," says a writer on the history of France, when speaking of the literature of the age, "the mind itself degenerates, the attention is distracted; the train of thought turns materially on the dangers which have with difficulty been escaped, and on the evils which are still apprehended; the mind is almost continually in a state of anxiety and passion, very unfavorable to the exercise of judgment and the cultivation of taste."*

During the period under review, in addition to those already mentioned, the empire of Charlemagne produced but few writers, either distinguished for weight of talents, or originality of genius. Between the death of Charlemagne and the accession of Hugh Capet A. D. 897, when a new dynasty ascended the throne of France, twelve kings are enumerated, not one of whom gave themselves any trouble about the concerns of literature or the advancement of science, except Charles the Bald, son of Louis le Debonnaire. This monarch exerted himself in the propogation of letters, as far as he was able from the internal condition of his empire. He increased the number of schools throughout the empire, and endeavored to excite a spirit of emulation among the learned, whom he invited to his court—but all his efforts availed but little; learning was rapidly retrograding to the state in which it was before the time of Charlemagne. Something more was wanting than mere royal patronage, to remove the cloud that was fast gathering, and which overspread christian Europe in the following century. In Italy Lothaire endeavored to revive the sciences, for which purpose he erected

* Rankins' Hist. of France, vol. 1.

schools in the principal cities, but little success attended his efforts.

Historical writing, or the composition of annals or chronicles, and disquisitions on abstruse points in theology, principally occupied the attention of those who were distinguished by the appellation of learned. The useful and interesting sciences which, at the present day, form so prominent a part of a liberal education, were but little known, and so little regarded, that at the close of the tenth century, *Gerbert*, archbishop of Rheims, was regarded as a magician, because he understood something of geometry, and was so much of an astronomer, as to be able to understand and explain the motions of the heavenly bodies. Poetry and belle-lettres were but little cultivated; they were unsuited to so barren a soil. Historical composition was more attended to—but how unlike the works of those ancient historians who have given immortality to Greece and Rome! How unlike the polished writings of Herodotus and Tacitus, of Xenophon or Polybius! Their histories, if they deserve the name, are little more than meagre chronicles of passing events, with but little variety in the style, and as little judgment in the arrangement of the materials of which they are composed. Their authors seldom indulged in reflections upon the causes which led to any great event they record; they leave their readers to draw their own inferences. The most celebrated works relating to the history of the times, were, the "Annals of the Abbey of Saint Bertin," written by different authors, which contains the history of France, from the year 741 to A. D. 861; the "Annals of Fulda," which embraces a period of one hundred and eighty-six years, from A. D. 741 to A. D. 900; the "Annals of Metz," which begins with the foundation of the French monarchy, and is continued to the tenth century; the "Memoirs of Louis le Debonnaire," by Thegan, which, besides the personal history of that unfortunate monarch, contains also, the history of the monarchy from his accession to the year A. D. 837.

Thegan, mentioned above as the author of the memoirs of Louis le Debonnaire, like all the learned men of his time, was an ecclesiastic, and had received such an education as fitted him for the high office of coadjutor to the bishop of Treves. After receiving this appointment, he applied himself with great zeal to the duties of his office, attending more to public preaching, than to private

study. His principal work is the one above-mentioned, which, being written in the form of annals, has no beauty or decoration of style to recommend it. He does justice to the character of Louis, his benefactor, and does not spare the bishops, who, after being raised by him from the lowest condition in life, to rank and power, became his most violent and unrelenting persecutors. Few princes suffered more from the violence of the clergy, than this unfortunate son of Charlemagne, whose virtues ought to have secured him a milder fate. With a temper peculiarly gentle, and almost incapable of being excited to anger, and withal, remarkable for his piety and devotion, he was a fit subject for the machinations of aspiring bishops, who had obtained over him an unbounded influence. This influence they exerted in dethroning him, and subjecting him to the most humiliating penance. They caused him to be clothed in hair-cloth, and prostrating himself on the ground before them, he humbly requested that he might be admitted to discipline according to the canons of the church, for the expiation of his sins. On this occasion, Hebo, bishop of Rheims, whom he had raised from the lowest condition to the highest order of the church, presided with all that insolence and haughtiness common to the clergy of the times, who affected to believe, that they received their authority immediately from God himself. Of Hebo, who, forgetful of his generous benefactor, thus returned evil for good, Thegan thus speaks: "Is it thus, perfidious wretch! thou requitest his beneficence who raised thee from a state of slavery? He clothed thee with purple, and thou hast covered him with sackcloth; he exalted thee to the summit of ecclesiastical honor and power, and thou hast deposed him from the throne of his fathers." This burst of honest indignation and noble feeling, should impress us with an opinion highly favorable to the moral and religious character of Thegan, who, amidst the corruption of the times, regardless of the frowns of his superiors, was bold enough to step forth the defender of his injured and unfortunate benefactor.

Contemporary with Thegan was *Walafrid*, abbé of Richenou, supposed to be the author of the "Annals of Fulda," of which religious house he had been an inmate. He was remarkable for his early display of genius, and was among the few authors of his time who courted the muses. His principal prose work

is "An account of the ordinances and worship of the christian church," in which he gives a history of the origin of the ceremonies used by the church. His poetical works consist of the "Acts and Life of Mamma," a saint and martyr of Cappadocia, a poem entitled the "Flower Garden," and other minor poems. The Life of Mamma, consists of twenty-six chapters, and describes all the miracles and striking events, that distinguished the life of the saint, and gave him a high character for sanctity. The "Flower Garden," consists of about two hundred lines, in which he treats of the names and virtues of plants, and gives a variety of directions on the subject of gardening—this work shows him to have been one of those who could walk abroad, and admire the wonderful works of creation. In the literary history of France he is mentioned as one who deserved to "be ranked among the most eminent writers of his time. There were few authors who wrote better than he did, in either verse or prose. In his prose there is a purity, a smoothness and arrangement of language, which, though imperfect, was then very rare. His poetical pieces have not all the same beauty; in some, there is a want of fire, of elevation, of poetic genius, but in some of them we see all those qualities beautifully united."

We will now turn our attention to the state of learning in England. Before the reign of Alfred, justly sirnamed the Great, the literature of England, like that of France before the reign of Charlemagne, was in a very humble condition, although her history boasts the name of the venerable Bede, already mentioned. A brief sketch of the condition of England, previous to the reign of Alfred, will give some idea of the causes of this state of things.

From the reign of Augustus until that of Valentinian the younger, about A. D. 440, Britain was a Roman province, and made considerable progress in acquiring a knowledge of the arts and sciences introduced by her enlightened conquerors. But when the magnificent fabric of Roman power and greatness, which had so long towered above that of all other nations, was, through the folly and weakness of her emperors, shaken to the foundation, the situation of the inhabitants of Britain was changed. Protected by the Roman arms, they enjoyed a state of comparative ease and comfort, and were enabled not only to cultivate such arts as contributed to their domestic convenience, but to pay so

such attention to learning, that many schools were instituted for the education of youth in the various branches of science then known. The exigencies of a fallen empire, however, required the withdrawal of her legions from a distant province to defend the "Eternal City" itself from the threatened attack of her Gothic invaders, and the deserted Britons were exposed to the inroads of their more rude and warlike neighbors. These unhappy people were reduced to so low a state, that in a letter to Aetius, the victorious general of Valentinian, they complained, that "the barbarians on the one hand, drive us into the sea; the sea, on the other, drives us back upon the barbarians. We have only the hard choice left us of perishing by the sword, or being drowned in the deep." In this deplorable condition, relying upon their own skill and prowess to repel invasions, and protect themselves from the assaults of their enemies, they had but little time to devote to the cultivation of learning—hence it not only languished, but the little that had been previously known was nearly lost.

In the wretched and humiliating condition above-mentioned, the Britons, almost driven to despair, applied for succor to the Saxons, a bold and restless people—a swarm from the great "northern hive." They represented themselves as almost worn out by hostile invasions, and harrassed by the continual incursions of their enemies. "We are," said they, "possessed of a wide extended and fertile country; this we yield wholly to be at thy devotion and command. Beneath the wings of your valor we seek for safety, and shall willingly undergo whatever services you may hereafter be pleased to impose." In consequence of this invitation, a considerable body of Saxons arrived in Britain under the command of two brother chiefs, Hengist and Horsa. They united with the Britons and gained a complete victory over the Picts and Scots, and being highly pleased with the fertility of the soil and the mildness of the climate, they persuaded a larger body of their countrymen to follow them. They succeeded, without much difficulty, in establishing themselves, and from friends and protectors of the Britons, they became their conquerors and oppressors, and, on the ruins of the independence of those they came to succor, they established the seven kingdoms of the Anglo-Saxons, called the Heptarchy. The division of the country into so many petty monarchies, whose con-

flicting interests, or motives of ambition, occasioned continual wars, left but little leisure for the cultivation of learning and the successful march of intellect. The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to christianity in the seventh century, had a considerable effect upon the interests of learning; by embracing christianity, they were led to make inquiries, and enter into speculations upon the various subjects, as well literary and scientific, as religious; schools were founded in different places, one of which, that of Canterbury, was enriched by many valuable books brought from Rome. The union of the kingdoms of the Heptarchy under Egbert, formed a happy era in the history of the country; united under one monarch, it was freed from those scenes of internal war which had long disturbed its peace. Egbert, early in life, withdrew from Briton into France, where he applied himself to study with so much diligence, that he made rapid progress in all the learning then known in the court of Charlemagne, and acquired such a fund of useful information, as subsequently enabled him to wield the sceptre with so much glory. Egbert encouraged learning and protected learned men, so far as he could consistently with the spirit of the times. His influence, however, was but little, notwithstanding his exalted station, when placed in competition with that of the clergy, whose interest it was to prevent the light of knowledge from spreading its beams too widely among the people.

Alfred succeeded his brother Ethelred A. D. 871. He was scarcely seated on the throne before he had to contend with the Danes, a formidable enemy, who, in the reigns of his predecessors, had gained a footing in the kingdom, and committed great outrages. It was reserved for Alfred to rid the country of these bold invaders, and give peace to his people, while he established his throne in security. Few monarchs are entitled to higher commendations than Alfred, as well on account of his military qualities, and his capacity for government, as for the encouragement he afforded to learning. His merits as a general are evinced in the skill with which he encountered the warlike Danes, led on, as they were, by skilful and experienced leaders; his capacity for government is evinced in the judicious laws he enacted for the security of the lives and property of his subjects; his zeal for learning is manifested in the measures he took for the instruction of the people in all useful knowledge. In

the midst of the cares of government, during a troublesome reign, he devoted eight hours every day to study and devotion. By his diligence he acquired considerable knowledge of grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, history and mathematics; he is said to have successfully courted the muses, and was acknowledged to be the best Saxon poet of his age. To improve the Saxon tongue, was one great object of Alfred, although capable of writing in Latin, the language of the learned, he not only wrote himself in the Saxon, but encouraged it in others, by which means the benefits of knowledge were accessible to all.*

Alfred is said to have founded the university of Oxford, and established professorships of grammar, rhetoric, philosophy and theology. With regard to the foundation of this university, the annals of the monastery of Winchester says, that "in the year of our Lord 886, in the second year of St. Grimbald's coming over to England,† the university of Oxford was founded. The first regents there, and readers in divinity, were St. Neot, an abbot and eminent professor of theology, and St. Grimbald, an eloquent and most excellent interpreter of the holy scriptures. Grammar and rhetoric were taught by Asserius, a monk, and a man of extraordinary learning. Logic, music and arithmetic, were read by John, a monk of St. Davids. Geometry and astronomy were professed by John, a monk and colleague of St. Grimbald, a man of sharp wit and immense knowledge. These lectures were often honored with the presence of the most illustrious and invincible monarch king Alfred, whose memory to every judicious taste shall be sweeter than honey." From this account it would appear, that Alfred not only established professorships in all the branches of knowledge then known, but appointed to the respective chairs men competent to teach. Besides the university of Oxford, he established schools throughout his kingdom, and enjoined every freeholder to send his children to these schools, and such of them as became distinguished for learning, he promoted to the highest offices, thus giving the most unequivocal proofs of his desire to disseminate knowledge throughout his kingdom. For the support of the university

* Previous to the invasion of the Saxons, the language of the Britons was the Celtic, but on their establishment, the Celtic was discontinued and the Saxon only used.

† St. Grimbald was a monk of Rheims in France, and being a man of some learning he was invited by Alfred to assist him in his studies.

and the other literary institutions, he allotted one eighth part of his whole revenue. In the incursions of the Danes, many of the monasteries were much injured, and learning sustained a heavy loss in the destruction of the libraries belonging to them. Alfred repaired the monasteries and replenished their libraries, and encouraged the multiplication of books by liberal rewards to those whose time was employed in copying. The reputation of Alfred as an author, rests upon his poetical effusions, and his translation into the Saxon language, of Bede's Ecclesiastical History, and Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy.

Contemporary with Alfred, and the most learned man of his age, was *Joannes Scotus*, whom he appointed abbot of Atheling. Scotus seeing that his own country afforded no means of acquiring that knowledge after which he thirsted, is supposed to have visited Constantinople, and other cities of the eastern empire, where he acquired a knowledge of the Greek language, and was made acquainted with the doctrines of the philosophy then taught. His attainments were so remarkable and profound for the age, that he acquired the appellation of Scotus the Wise. He was celebrated as a metaphysician, and wrote a work "On the nature of things," in which he taught, that God is all things, and that all things are God—that after the resurrection, nature itself will return to God—that God will be all in all, and there will remain nothing but God alone." These, and other opinions of Scotus, on religious points, were not considered orthodox, particularly the opinions he entertained with regard to predestination and the eucharist, and involved him in disputes with a crowd of monks, who were alike incapable of upholding their own doctrines by force of reason and argument, or of overturning his. He translated the works of Dionysius, the Areopagite, which had been long held in great veneration by the Greek christians, and which were sent by the Greek emperor Michael, to the emperor Louis the Mild. The translation of these works being made without consulting the pope, gave great offence to the successor of St. Peter, Nicholas I, as they contained many opinions contrary to the doctrines of the church of Rome. Nicholas, in the plenitude of papal power, addressed an angry letter to the king of France, (at whose request the translation was made, and in whose kingdom Scotus then resided,) commanding him to send the offender to Rome. "I have been informed," says

the pope, "that one John, a Scotchman by birth, hath lately translated into Latin, the work of Dionysius, the Areopagite, concerning the divine names and the celestial hierarchy, which he should have sent me for my approbation, according to custom. This was the more necessary, because the said John, though a man of great learning, is reported not to think rightly in some things." Charles the Bald, then king of France, had too great an affection for his friend, to comply with the command of the pontiff, but Scotus thought it most advisable to leave Paris, and return to England, where he ended his days.

The state of learning in the following century was more deplorable than during any antecedent or subsequent period. "For its barbarism and wickedness, it may be called the age of iron; for its dulness and stupidity, the age of lead; and for its blindness and ignorance, the age of darkness." The enlightened mind that dwells with enthusiasm upon the present exalted state of literature in the christian world, reverts with melancholy sensations to its untoward fate in this century, when "Night's daughter, Ignorance, did wrap all around her." As we before remarked, the advancement of learning and its depression, are intimately connected with the internal condition of a country, and the state of society. It is a "natural produce of the human mind," says the elegant author of the Essay on Civil Society, "and will rise spontaneously wherever we are happily placed," and, we may add, from the history and experience of ages, it will cease to flourish when internal wars and civil commotions invade the peaceful sanctuaries of private life. This remark is strikingly illustrated by a recurrence to the period which elapsed from the death of Alfred to the Norman conquest. Whilst the powerful hand of Alfred swayed the sceptre, and his vigorous mind directed the energies of the nation, the literary foundations which his genius planned, and his munificence supported, were in a flourishing condition. They opened wide their portals to all who sought instruction, and desired by cultivating the mind, to fit it for those intellectual pleasures nature destined it to enjoy, while confined to its earthly tabernacle. This fair prospect, however, was of short duration; the wise and liberal policy of Alfred; his meritorious and unceasing exertions to diffuse scientific and literary knowledge throughout his dominions, nearly failed of their object on his demise. His successors from

various causes were incapable of treading in his footsteps, and the lamp of learning which his genius kindled, and which had begun to extend its rays beyond the academic groves of Oxford, was nearly extinguished in those disastrous times that accompanied the repeated incursions of the Danes. England, since so distinguished for every thing great in literature, science and art, sunk again into intellectual barbarism, so low indeed, that many of the clergy were scarcely able to read the Lord's prayer in Latin. He who could recite the usual service of the church, although he could not comprehend one half of what he read, was regarded as one gifted with superior intelligence—a very prodigy of learning and talents.

Among those who were called learned in England, in this dark and barbarous age, was *Dunstan*, archbishop of Canterbury, better known to readers of English history, as the cruel and unrelenting persecutor of Elgiva, the wife of Edwy, than for any great merit as a writer. He composed a treatise on "Occult philosophy," a subject well suited to the genius and philosophy of the age. He is said by the monkish historians of the times, to have excelled as much in learning as he did in piety; "so acute was his reason, so lively his imagination, and so admirable his elocution, that no man ever conceived things with greater quickness, expressed them with greater elegance, nor pronounced them with greater sweetness." But what reliance can be placed on such opinions, when we are gravely told by William of Malmsbury, in general a respectable historian, that in the days of St. Dunstan, "there were no such things as fear, discord, oppression or murder, but that all men lived in perfect virtue and tranquillity; and that all those felicities flowed from the blessed St. Dunstan, for which, as well as his miracles, he was loaded with glory." A comparison of the real history of the times, with this fanciful description of unexampled happiness, will present a melancholy contrast.

This deplorable ignorance was not confined to England; as dark a cloud hung over the nations of the continent. Even Rome, the seat of the sovereign pontiff, where genius, learning and talents once reigned triumphant—where once were heard the eloquence of Cicero and the melodious strains of Virgil and Horace, was so enveloped in intellectual darkness, that it was declared by a synod convened at Rheims, that "at Rome no one

had as much learning as would be necessary for a porter," and a contemporary writer exclaims, "O miserable Rome! thou that didst formerly hold out so many great and glorious luminaries to our ancestors, into what prodigious darkness art thou now fallen, which will render thee infamous to all succeeding ages." This point cannot be better illustrated, than by bringing to view one or two instances of the utter ignorance that prevailed, even among the higher clergy, from which the general state of learning may be inferred; for it must be borne in mind, that all the learning of the times, was almost exclusively confined to this favored and privileged class. An archbishop of Rheims, one of the first dignitaries of the Gallican church, at the time of his consecration to the archepiscopal office, was called upon, as was usual upon such occasions, to read in Latin, a portion of the divine precepts of his master—of that sacred gospel it was his duty to teach and to preach—but he was so deplorably ignorant, as to be unable to comprehend the meaning of the plainest passages. Another bishop, whose head had long been decorated with the mitre, was unable to read the psalter without committing such blunders, as perverted the meaning of almost every sentence. And yet did such men undertake to govern empires, to throw down and build up thrones at pleasure—to such men was committed the important office of pointing out to erring and wayward man, the road to heaven! The sciences of the *trivium*, or grammar, rhetoric and dialectics, embraced nearly every thing taught in the schools that were to be found attached to the monasteries, and the teacher's skill scarcely went beyond their elements. This ignorance was accompanied by its usual associates, superstition and credulity. No story appeared too marvellous, no legend too absurd, to be received by the ignorant multitude. Devoted to their spiritual guides, and submitting their understandings to their direction, the nobility and inferior laity were easily persuaded, that learning was useful only to the clergy, and that the time necessary for the acquirement of the little knowledge they possessed, was so much lost from the nobler employments of war and the chase. The clergy constituted themselves arbiters and judges in temporal as well as spiritual matters, thus confounding temporal and spiritual things, which ought ever to be kept separate and distinct. Their usual language to the laity was, "redeem your souls from destruction

while you have the means in your power; offer presents and tythes to churchmen; humbly implore the patronage of the saints; for if you observe these things you may come with security in the day of the tribunal of the eternal judge, and say, give us, O Lord, for we have given unto thee;" and to their arrogant demands, the laity yielded a ready and implicit obedience.

Dark and gloomy as was the state of learning in the tenth century, as if to redeem it from the imputation of total darkness, near its close appeared *Gerbert*, archbishop of Rheims, and afterwards pope, under the name of Sylvester II. Being seized with a desire of learning, he took advantage of every opportunity for gaining information, and after assiduous application, he not only acquired himself considerable knowledge in mechanics, geometry, arithmetic and other useful sciences, but he employed every means in his power to encourage others to pursue the same studies. Gerbert was indebted for much of his knowledge to the Arabians of Spain. He spent some time in attending the celebrated schools of Cordova and Seville, where, under Islaim teachers, he became familiar with that system of philosophy, which, in the following century, was introduced into christian Europe, and became the foundation on which the superstructures of various systems were subsequently erected. The knowledge of geometry possessed by Gerbert, although by no means extensive, was so far beyond that of his contemporaries, that they regarded his geometrical figures, as magical operations, and he was himself looked upon as a magician and a disciple of satan. The zeal of Gerbert, united to the influence of his elevated station as sovereign pontiff, had no inconsiderable effect in reviving that taste for learning which appeared in the following century.*

* Rank. Hist. of France; Gifford's Hist. of France; Millot's Gen. Hist.; Mosh. Ecc. Hist.; Enf. Hist. of Phil.; Henry's Hist. of Great Brit.; Humes' Hist. of Eng.; Golds. Hist. of Eng.; Edin. Ency.; Rees's Cycl.; Sismondi's Hist. Rep.; Ital. Russ. Mod. Eu.

CHAPTER XVIII.

History of literature from the beginning of the eleventh, to the middle of the thirteenth century.

The early part of the eleventh, was undistinguished from the preceding century; the same ignorance, the same superstition and credulity, and the same blind devotion of the people to their spiritual fathers, whose views and exertions were more directed to their own advancement, than the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom upon earth. This influence of the clergy, to which we have often had occasion to allude, and the manner in which it was exercised, we find difficult to reconcile with our present modes of thinking in the present state of religion. The clergy, it is true, at the present day, possess a certain degree of influence, and they rightly possess it, but it is only that which results from superior piety, and their capability of instructing their hearers in those important truths which relate to their future hopes, and their condition in the world beyond the grave. To such objects the exertions of the primitive fathers of the church, the immediate successors of the apostles, were directed; they meddled not with the temporal concerns of kingdoms. In a few centuries the character of the clergy changed; instead of devoting their lives to the service of the church, and enlightening the minds of their flocks, by diffusing the divine light of the gospel, they employed their influence for the purpose of exercising a control over political events, and enslaving the minds of both prince and people—spiritual yielded to temporal concerns, and they became more ambitious of being distinguished for skill, with which they managed the affairs of empires, than for their labors in the "calling wherewith they were called." Had the clergy been differently disposed, and, instead of keeping among themselves all the learning of the times—had they opened their stores of mental wealth, and scattered it abroad among the people, although their influence in some respects might have been diminished, they would have raised themselves to the en-

viable rank of benefactors of the human race. They would have erected to themselves monuments more durable than brass or marble, in that intellectual light which might have equalled the proud era of Augustan literature. But regardless of future fame, they permitted the light of learning to be hid behind dark clouds, for nine hundred years, and it was not until the middle of the eleventh century the clouds began to disperse, and that light began to illuminate the world, which shone in full splendor in the fifteenth century.

After the conquest of England, by William of Normandy, A. D. 1066, and the consequent establishment of the Normans in the conquered territory, learning made some advances. The tyrannical oppression which William exercised over his new subjects, with regard to property, was most severely felt; he fleeced them of their money without scruple, and he depopulated whole districts to make hunting grounds, without giving the people any remuneration. No king of England was ever so opulent, or so able to support the splendor and magnificence of a court, or to have promoted the interests of learning; but William, like all the other princes of the age, had never devoted much time to the pursuit of that knowledge to be derived from books, and if he did not directly encourage it by his liberality and his own example, he did nothing to suppress it. We, therefore, find, that under his rigorous government, the state of learning became more respectable and more prosperous, than it had been since the days of Alfred.

The reign of William is distinguished by the name of *Ingulph*, his secretary, who received his education at the university of Oxford, which had assumed a high rank among seminaries of learning. In addition to the sciences usually taught at this period, which, we have already seen, were very limited in number, he applied himself to the study of the philosophy of Aristotle, some books of which had escaped the fury of the Danes. He wrote an historical work which gained him considerable reputation, and is still regarded as good authority for the history of the times in which it treats. With the knowledge and talents he possessed, had he devoted his life to study, he might have attained still higher distinction in the republic of letters, but seized with that romantic spirit which pervaded all ranks, he joined a body of seven thousand pilgrims, at the head of which was the

archbishop of Mayence, who designed to vist the holy sepulchre, then the most striking object of christian devotion. A remnant of this band, (among whom was Ingulph,) after encountering many trials and dangers, and after being robbed and otherwise maltreated by tribes of wandering Arabs, arrived at the Holy City, and, having made a solemn procession to the sepulchre, they performed those sacred rites that the devout and weary pilgrim felt himself bound to perform. These pilgrimages are the more remarkable and interesting in the history of the world, as the treatment the pilgrims received at the hands of the followers of the koran, gave rise to those celebrated expeditions called the *crusades*, which caused Europe so much blood and treasure, without gaining one important end in a political or religious point of view. The archbishop and the remnant of his party, after encountering innumerable hardships, returned to Europe, and Ingulph reached his native land with only twenty of the numerous body that accompanied him. The difficulties and dangers attending this long and hazardous journey, seemed but to inspire new zeal, and encourage others to seek the sepulchre of their crucified savior. Spencer, in his Fairy Queen, thus describes the pilgrim:

A silly man, in simple weeds forworne;
And soil'd with dust of the long-dried way;
His sandales were with toilsome travell torne,
And face all tand with scorching sunny ray,
As he had travell'd many a sommer's day
Through boyling sands of Arabie and Inde;
And in his hand a Jacob's staffe, to stay
His weary limbs upon; and eke behind
His scrip did hang, in which his needments he did bind.

Can. 6.—35.

Contemporary with Ingulph was Anselm, who was born, A. D. 1033, in Piedmont. He received a liberal education for the times, principally at Bec, in Normandy. A. D. 1093 he was appointed to the see of Canterbury by William Rufus, who, in a severe illness, consented to fill that see, which had been vacant for five years. Anselm was scarcely invested with the insignia of his episcopal dignity before he quarrelled with the king, which resulted in his expulsion from the kingdom. On the death of William, he was recalled by his successor, Henry I, and was received with every mark of respect and reinstated in his

see. The haughty temper of the primate, and his devotion to the Roman Pontiff, very soon occasioned a quarrel with the king, and the withdrawal of Anselm from the kingdom. This quarrel being settled, he returned to England and died A. D. 1109, in the 76th year of his age. The writings of Anselm are altogether theological and metaphysical, and, it is said, that he greatly contributed by his writings to the dissemination of that system of philosophy called *Scholastic*, which afterwards prevailed very extensively. In some of his works, he throws much light upon the darkness in which the science of logic had been long involved, and removed much of the cloud, that hung over the important sciences of metaphysics and natural theology—sciences at that time but little understood.

On the continent, during the eleventh century, flourished several learned men, among whom was *Fulbert*, *Berengarius* and a few others. *Fulbert*, bishop of Chartres, was esteemed one of the most learned men of the age, and an ornament of the court of Robert, king of France, the son of Hugh Capet, the founder of the Capetian dynasty. Fulbert was eminent for his love of letters, and displayed great zeal for the general education of youth, a circumstance so rare among the clergy of the times, that it should inspire a degree of veneration for his character. He was a devout christian, and famous for a superstitious and idolatrous attachment to the Virgin Mary, which, notwithstanding his otherwise enlightened mind, led him into ridiculous extremes.

Berengarius, called also *Berenger of Cologne*, was educated under Fulbert mentioned above. He was a great master of the dialectic art, and acquired much celebrity for the zeal with which he opposed the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation—that in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the bread was the identical body, and the wine the very blood of Christ. He was summoned to attend a council at Mucelli, to answer for his heretical opinions, but instead of attending in person, he sent two friends to appear in his behalf. He was condemned by the council, and his friends imprisoned. This did not shake the firmness of his soul, or hinder him from propagating his opinions, which gained ground rapidly. He was again summoned before the council of Tours, where his doctrines were again condemned, and he himself abjured them in the presence of the council.

Repenting of the weakness of his conduct, he again taught the same doctrines, was again condemned, and again abjured them. At length, tired of controversy, he retired from the world, and died A. D. 1088, leaving behind him a character for extraordinary sanctity, notwithstanding the heretical opinions he had been laboring to establish.

In the twelfth century, the scholastic philosophy began to be publicly taught in the schools; before this time it had many disciples, but a public dissemination of its doctrines had not been ventured upon. The doctrines of the *scholastics* were those of the modern peripatetic school—a mixture of the Arabic and christian. It was received into Europe through the Arabic schools of Spain, where the philosophy of Aristotle had long been taught, by means of translations from the Greek by Arabian scholars. We have already adverted to the state of learning in Spain under the Moorish princes, and have spoken of their splendid seminaries of learning at Granada, Cordova and Seville, when the christians of Europe were sunk in comparative barbarism, and enveloped in the dark clouds of ignorance and superstition. Towards the close of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth century, a new spirit being awakened in Europe, the schools of the Arabians in Spain became the resort of those who were ambitious of literary distinction—they sought among the disciples of the crescent for instruction in literature and science, and returned deeply embued with the philosophy of Aristotle, which formed one of the chief branches of Arabian learning. Many Arabian books on this favorite subject, were translated into the various languages of Europe, and were afterwards transcribed, thus affording facilities for its more general diffusion. One of the most distinguished of those who undertook the labor of translating the works of the Arabian writers, was *Constantine*, a monk of Cassino, who had spent thirty years in travelling over the countries of the east, and had made himself master of seven or eight of the oriental languages, besides Greek, Latin and Italian. His labors in the retirement of the cloisters of Cassino, contributed greatly, not only to the introduction of the philosophy of Aristotle, but to excite a taste for literature, and promote the revival of learning. In this, his exertions were aided by the labors of *Morley*, a native of Norfolk in England, who, having studied in the schools of Paris and Oxford, and learned Arabic

at Toledo, wrote a work entitled, "On the upper and lower part of the world," deeply tinctured with the philosophy of the school of which we are speaking. Another English work, *Adelard* of Bath, studied the mathematical and philosophical sciences in Spain, and translated from the Arabic the "Elements of Euclid." Their successful cultivation of learning, their support of scholastic philosophy, and the consequent reputation they acquired, induced others to pursue the same track, thus presenting in their own example, a strong incentive to emulation.

About this time were going forward those romantic expeditions for the recovery of the Holy Land, called the crusades, which agitated Europe and Asia for two hundred years. The Roman pontiffs from the time of Sylvester II, who filled the pontifical throne at the close of the tenth century, had been forming plans for driving the followers of Mahomet from the Holy Land, and for the extension of their spiritual power over Asia. Gregory VII, the most enterprising and ambitious pontiff that ever filled the chair of St. Peter, had determined to lead an expedition in person, and had even mustered fifty thousand men, but was obliged to abandon the design in consequence of his quarrels with the emperor Henry IV. Under the pontificate of Urban II, at the celebrated council of Clermont, the great design was determined upon, and A. D. 1096, eight hundred thousand men, influenced by a spirit of fanaticism, set forth under different commanders, for the redemption of the holy sepulchre, and the destruction of those who were considered the enemies of God. That fierce courage and intolerant spirit, and that religious zeal, which were the strong features in the character of the times, prosecuted these destructive wars for two hundred years, until at length the crescent triumphed over the cross.

Notwithstanding religious zeal, military ardor and a desire for distinction in arms, were the predominating motives that actuated the crusaders, there were yet some among them of a more mild and gentle spirit, who, as opportunity served, examined the remains of antiquity with an eye of observant curiosity, and who brought from the libraries of Constantinople, some valuable remains of Grecian learning, by which means Greek copies of the work of Aristotle were introduced into Europe, and studied, instead of translations from the Arabic. The church, however, viewed with jealousy and apprehension, the spread of doctrines,

which it regarded as encroaching on the established faith; several of its teachers were not only subjected to ecclesiastical censure, but their writings were publicly burned, and the use of the works of Aristotle were prohibited in the schools by the synod of Paris, and by a bull from the vatican.

These prohibitory decrees, as is generally the case, instead of preventing the study of scholastic philosophy, had the direct tendency of increasing the desire to be acquainted with its doctrines and principles. That spirit of opposition, which appears to be one of the principles of our nature, was set to work, and the disciples of the school became more zealous in their support of it, and more eager to disseminate its doctrines. So much increased in numbers, and so powerful had they become, that the orthodox clergy thought it necessary to prevent their opinions from spreading too wide, but, to preserve their own influence, to favor, under some restrictions, this suspicious philosophy. The dialectics, physics and metaphysics of Aristotle, were permitted to be taught in the university of Paris, and A. D. 1331, Pope Gregory IX. permitted them to be taught, after they had been examined, and purged from what were considered errors. After this period the church of Rome began to consider the philosophy of Aristotle as one of the pillars of the hierarchy, and in the year 1366, pope Urban V. appointed several members of the sacred college, to settle the manner in which his writings should be studied in the university of Paris, and in the year 1462, Charles VII. ordered them to be read and explained in that university.

One of the most distinguished disciples of this school was *William de Champeaux*, archbishop of Paris. Before his promotion to the see of Paris, he taught philosophy with great reputation in the university of Paris, and was the teacher of the famous *Peter Abelard*, better known at the present day as the lover of Heloise, than as a teacher of philosophy. Abelard, speaking of Champeaux, calls him an "eminent and able preceptor."

Abelard was born A. D. 1079, and received his first instructions from Rosceline, the founder of the sect of *Nominalists*, one of the sects into which the philosophy of the scholastics was divided. He afterwards studied under *Champeaux*, with whom he often entered into argument, and so subtle was his mode of reasoning, that he often confounded his master. This difference of opinion induced Abelard to set up a school of his own, in the

town of Melun, about ten leagues from Paris, where he soon attracted a crowd of followers; Champeaux did every thing in his power to prevent the erection of this school, and after it was established, he threw every impediment he possibly could in the way of its prosperity. In consequence of ill health, caused by continued study and exertions in behalf of his school, Abelard retired to Bretagne, his native country, and after an absence of two years he returned, and renewed his controversy with his former preceptor with such ability, that he gained many of his pupils. Abelard afterwards began to lecture in theology, and his explanations of the scriptures soon raised his reputation to such a height, that he had crowded auditories, and gained considerable profit. In the midst of these labors, which were gaining him both reputation and money, he became acquainted with Heloise, whose education he was employed by her uncle to superintend. They became attached to each other, and a connection ensued, which proved mutually unfortunate, and resulted in Abelard giving himself up to a monastic life, and Heloise taking the veil. After time had rendered his misfortune familiar to him, he was desirous of regaining the reputation he had acquired, of the most learned man of his age, and again applied himself with renewed zeal, to the prosecution of those studies he had neglected during the prevalence of his ill-fated passion for Heloise. In consequence of the doctrines entertained in his book on "The Mystery of the Trinity," he was charged with heresy, and tried before a council at Soissons A. D. 1121; his book was condemned to be burned, and himself ordered to retire to the monastery of St. Medard. After undergoing several other persecutions, he finally found refuge in the priory of St. Marcellus, near Chalons, where he died in the sixty-third year of his age A. D. 1142. He was buried in the convent of the Paraclete, founded by Heloise. Abelard was a man of superior talents and extensive acquirements, when the state of learning in the age in which he lived is considered. His "Christian Theology," and some of his epistles have been published. He is said to have written many treatises on philosophy, which have never been published.

The genius and talents of Abelard having called forth many admirers, and his literary reputation having excited a spirit of emulation, and induced also a stronger desire of knowledge, much of that dark cloud which had so long hung over the intel-

lectual world, was dispersed. We find men devoting a portion of their time to the acquisition of useful science and general literature, instead of employing themselves exclusively in the discussion of abstruse points in theology, or losing themselves in the metaphysical subtilties of a corrupt and mongrel system of philosophy. Following in the track of their preceptor, many of the numerous disciples of Abelard, became distinguished in the literary history of the times, and obtained the highest dignities in the church. To mention all who were thus distinguished, and detail their peculiar merits, would be as tedious as unprofitable. We shall, therefore, only notice two or three, who may with propriety be selected from the mass.

Peter Lombard was born in Lombardy, and was educated at Paris. He was advanced to the dignity of archbishop of Paris A. D. 1159. He was celebrated for a theological work, entitled "The Master of Sentences," which was a collection of opinions and sentences, relative to the various branches of theology that had been subjects of controversy, extracted from the doctors of the church, and many commentaries were written upon it. Lombard died A. D. 1164.

Among the most distinguished men of his age was *John of Salisbury*, who received the rudiments of his education in his native land. Possessing uncommon industry, and a mind capable of receiving and comprehending whatever was presented before it, he soon acquired a considerable share, not only of the philosophical and theological learning of the age, but of general literature, including a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, languages at that time but little cultivated, and of course, but little understood. Having acquired a valuable stock of useful knowledge, and knowing how to improve it to advantage, he determined to visit the companions of his early studies, in order that they might derive some benefit from his instructions. The situation in which he found them, with regard to mental improvement, will convey some idea of what was the general state of knowledge. He says, "I found them the same men, and in the same place; nor had they advanced a single step towards resolving our ancient questions, nor added a single proposition, however small, to their stock of knowledge." He also describes some of the philosophers of his time, as rendering their lectures, or discourses, designedly obscure, that they might have the reputation of supe-

rior wisdom, and impose upon the ignorance and credulity of those who were unable to see through the mask; many of them, also, in consequence of their superficial knowledge, frequently confounded the peripatetic and platonic systems. He was the firm friend and supporter of Thomas A. Becket, an ambitious and disorganizing prelate, who caused so much disturbance in England, in the reign of Henry II, and when Becket was obliged to fly from England and seek refuge on the continent, John accompanied him. As a writer, he was distinguished for his lively wit and flowing eloquence; his principal works are his "Metalogicum," or apology for grammar, philosophy and the logic of Aristotle, and his "Letters."

In the thirteenth century, flourished the celebrated *Thomas Aquinas*, a native of Italy. He made himself master of the philosophy of the age, and having removed to Paris, where he gained some distinction as a teacher, he was made a doctor of divinity about the year 1256. Although Aquinas is celebrated, in the history of those times, his fame appears to be founded rather upon his abilities and learning as a theologian, and as a great champion of church, than any extensive knowledge of science. He does not appear to deserve the praises bestowed upon him by his admirers, as a learned man; he was unacquainted with general literature—with the elegant and liberal studies that relieve the dryness of abstract speculations and theological disputations. He was also unacquainted with the Greek language, so that his knowledge of the ancient philosophy then taught, was derived through the medium of translations. His most celebrated work is his "Heads of Theology," still referred to, by the catholics particularly, to support some doubtful or controverted point in theology. He died A. D. 1274, at the monastery of Fossa Nova, in Campania, but his body was afterwards removed to Toulouse; he was canonized by pope John XXII, and many miracles are said to have been wrought at his tomb.

We might enumerate many others of the same class of writers and philosophers, who flourished in the thirteenth century, but we will pass on, and present to the notice of our readers one of the luminaries of the age, *Roger Bacon*, whose extensive knowledge in the various departments of learning and science, procured him the title of "*Wonderful Doctor*." He was born at Ilchester, in England, in the year 1214. At Oxford he studied

grammar, rhetoric and logic, and afterwards visited Paris, where he attended the lectures of the professors or doctors of the university. At Paris he received the degree of doctor of divinity, and entered into the religious order of Grey Friars, that he might be able to prosecute his studies without interruption. With so much success did he prosecute his inquiries into the mysteries of nature, as exhibited in the natural world, and so much superior was his knowledge of chemistry, astronomy, and other useful services, to those by whom he was surrounded, that some of his brethren, influenced by such feelings as govern little minds, charged him with practising magical arts, and holding communion with devils—a charge readily believed by an ignorant and superstitious multitude. This charge having reached the ears of the pope, Bacon sent, not only his philosophical writings, but even his instruments to Rome, in order that his holiness might be satisfied on so important a point, and himself relieved from the imputation of being concerned with the spirits of darkness. Although he this time escaped the machinations of his enemies, and the punishment of his fancied crimes, yet, in the year 1278, he was seized and imprisoned, and Nicholas II. prohibited the perusal of his writings. Such was the fate of a man who was the ornament of the age in which he lived. He continued in confinement ten years, and having regained his liberty, he returned to Oxford, where he died in the 78th year of his age.

Bacon was not only the light of the age in which he lived, but modern writers are indebted to him for many useful hints and discoveries in science. He was the author of many valuable works, most of which were destroyed during the wars and civil commotions that grew out of the reformation. A bare recapitulation of the titles of his various works would show, that he went far beyond his contemporaries in learning and science. He greatly contributed to revive and extend the study of mathematics, and his knowledge of chemistry was very considerable; he appears also to have employed his skill in attempts to discover the philosopher's stone, so long the object of alchemical research. To him is ascribed the invention of gunpowder, an invention which has so completely changed the operations of war, and he was so well versed in astronomy, that the correction of the calendar made by Gregory XIII. is said to have been sug-

gested by him. It may with justice be said that from his cell "issued the first gleams of that unquenchable flame, which, after the lapse of ages, was destined to burst forth with augmented splendor, guiding the steps of the inquisitive in the paths of discovery, and lighting prostrate nations to the means of securing the inestimable blessing of liberty of conscience, and the sacred immunities of freeborn men."

In the eleventh century arose that singular order of men, (if they may be so distinguished,) called *Troubadours*, whose fame for several centuries filled the courts of Princes. They first appeared in the south of France, at the court of the Count of Provence, from whence they spread over other parts of Europe. The name of *Troubadour* is derived from the Italian word *trovare* to find or invent, because they were the inventors of that species of poetry for which they became so celebrated. No poets of ancient or modern times were ever held in higher esteem. Raimond V. count of Provence, exempted them from taxes, and they not only visited the courts of Princes and the castles of nobles, where they were received with every mark of respect and favor, but they travelled through different nations without apprehension—there was a sort of sacredness attached to their character, that protected them from insult or injury. They wandered

> ——————— from hall to hall,
> Baronial court or royal; cheer'd with gifts
> Munificent, and love, and ladies' praise.

The ladies were particularly ambitious of being celebrated by them; and they would rather submit to be teased with their importunities, than by rejecting their addresses incur their hatred or displeasure. The troubadour was extravagant in panegyric, and he could be so severe in satire, that it was dangerous to affront them, unless indeed the person offering the affront was proof against the shafts of satire.

Love and gallantry, and martial deeds, formed the chief subjects of the compositions of the troubadours, and as soon as one found himself established in the court of a prince or noble, he feigned a passion for his patron's wife, and began to compose verses in her praise. In these effusions they indulged in the most extravagant comparisons, but they generally used language

pure, delicate and tender. The poetry of the troubadours may be divided into three classes, viz: the *Chanzos*, which celebrated love and gallantry; the *Sirventes*, of which war, or satire were the main subjects, and the *Tensons*, or songs in dialogue between two speakers, when each successively recited a stanza. The *tenson* was usually recited in the court of Love, held by the lady of the castle, surrounded by the youthful beauties of her household. This court was held at the conclusion of a tournament, and sometimes those knights who had contended for the prize of skill and valor in arms, disputed for the prize of minstrelsy. One of the two, proposed the subject of dispute, which was answered by the other, in the same measure, and singing the same air. Their respective claims were then gravely discussed by the ladies who constituted the court, who were the sole judges in such matters, and the judgment was frequently given in verse; many of the high born dames of the times being celebrated for their skill in minstrelsy. Some of the effusions of these female troubadours, are still in existence and display a genius for poetry of high order. The following translation of a fragment of a song by *Clara d' Andusa*, is no unfavorable specimen:

Into what cruel grief and deep distress
  The jealous and the false have plung'd my heart,
  Depriving it by every treacherous art
Of all its hopes of joy and happiness:
For they have forc'd thee from my arms to fly
  Whom far above this life I prize;
  And they have hid thee from my loving eyes,
Alas! with grief, and ire, and rage I die.

Yet they, who blame my passionate love to thee,
  Can never teach my heart a nobler flame,
  A sweeter hope, than that which thrills my frame,
A love so full of joy and harmony.
Nor is there one—no, not my deadliest foe,
  Whom, speaking praise of thee, I do not love,
  Nor one, so dear to me, who would not move
My wrath, if from his lips dispraise should flow.

Fear not, fair love, my heart shall never fail
  In its fond trust—fear not that it will change
  Its faith, and to another loved one range;
No! though a hundred tongues that heart assail
For love, who has my heart at his command,
  Decrees it shall be faithful found to thee
  And it shall be so,—Oh, had I been free,
Thou, who hast all my heart, hadst had my hand.

Among the early Troubadours, we find Richard, Cœur de Lion, king of England, who appears to have been renowned in poetry, as well as in arms. It is known, that Richard on his return from the Holy Land, after having vanquished the celebrated Saladin, and performed prodigies of valor, was shipwrecked on the coast of Istria, and, in endeavoring to reach his native land, in the disguise of a pilgrim, was discovered, and thrown into prison by Leopold, duke of Austria, whom he had offended at the siege of Ptolemais. During his confinement Richard composed several songs, which have been preserved. The following extract from one of them will give some idea of his talents as a poet:

No wretched captive of his prison speaks,
Unless with pain and bitterness of soul,
Yet consolation from the muse he seeks
Whose voice alone misfortune can control.
Where now is each ally, each baron, friend,
Whose face I ne'er beheld without a smile?
Will none, his sovereign to redeem, expend
The smallest portion of his treasures vile?

Though none may blush, that near two tedious years,
Without relief my bondage has endur'd,
Yet know, my English, Norman, Gascon peers,
Not one of you should thus remain immur'd:
The meanest subject of my wide domains,
Had I been free, a ransom should have found;
I mean not to reproach you with my chains,
Yet still I wear them on a foreign ground!

He thus alludes to the conduct of Philip, king of France, who taking advantage of his absence had declared war against him:

But small is my surprise, though great my grief,
To find, in spite of all his solemn vows,
My lands are ravaged by the Gallic chief,
While none my cause has courage to espouse.
Though lofty towers obscure the cheerful day,
Yet, through the dungeon's melancholy gloom,
Kind hope, in gentle whispers, seems to say,
"Perpetual thraldom is not yet thy doom."

In the twelfth century, flourished *Arnaud de Marveil*, a distinguished Troubadour. He was of humble rank in life, but his talents procured him powerful friends, and the protection of the viscount of Beziers, in whose territory he was born. He has left many poems, some of which contain four hundred verses.

There is a sweetness of expression in the following lines, that cannot but charm the reader; much is due, however, to the genius of the translator:

Oh! how sweet the breeze of April,
Breathing soft as May draws near!
While, through nights of tranquil beauty,
Songs of gladness meet the ear;
Every bird his well known language
Uttering in the morning's pride,
Revelling in joy and gladness
By his happy partner's side.

When aroused me, all is smiling,
When to life the young birds spring,
Thoughts of love, I cannot hinder,
Come, my heart inspiriting—
Nature, habit, both incline me
In such joy to bear my part:
With such sounds of bliss around me,
Who could wear a sadden'd heart?

Fairer than the far-famed Helen,
Lovelier than the flowrets gay,
Snow-white teeth, and lips truth-telling,
Heart as open as the day;
Golden hair, and fresh bright roses—
Heaven, who form'd a thing so fair,
Knows that never yet another
Lived, who can with her compare.

Pierre Vidal, of Thoulouse, was one of the most celebrated Troubadours of his age; he flourished at the close of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century. He acquired a high reputation as a poet, which producing inordinate vanity, led him into the most extravagant and ridiculous conduct. Inflated beyond measure by the praises bestowed upon him, he seems to have thought that every species of extravagance ought to be tolerated in him. The collection of his poems contains more than sixty pieces, some of them of considerable length. He entertained a high opinion of his profession, regarding the Troubadours as the instructers of nations, and poetry as the storehouse of universal philosophy. An anecdote is related of him, which evinces something of the madman. On his return from the island of Cyprus, whither he had accompanied the crusaders, he fell in love with a lady by the name of *Wolf*, and dressing himself in a wolf skin, submitted to the danger of being hunted for her sake. In this garb he was pursued by the dogs to the moun-

tains, and was with difficulty relieved by the hunters, from his perilous situation. He died A. D. 1329, on his return from the Levant.

Besides those above-mentioned, there were a multitude of other Troubadours, of about equal merit, who thronged the courts of princes, and sought the favor and protection of the great. "Their language was almost the same, and seems only to vary, according to the greater or less negligence of the copyists; or, perhaps, in consequence of the pretensions of the later poets, who, to gain the reputation of employing singular and difficult rhymes, corrupted their language by augmenting its obscurity and irregularities. We find the same gallantry expressed in the same hyperbolical terms; the same tenderness, proceeding from the same ingenious conceits of the brain, rather than from the real feeling of the heart; the same love songs, presenting the portrait of a beauty like all other beauties, with the same exaggerations of her merit, her birth and her character; the same tears, the same submission, the same praises, each undistinguishable from the other, and all of them equally tedious."

After the thirteenth century the Troubadours were scarcely heard, and on the revival of letters, they gave place to poets of another character. Their decay is attributed to the degraded condition into which the *Jongleurs*, who were the reciters of their verses, had fallen. These Jongleurs led a wandering life, and accompanied their recitations of the songs of the Troubadours, with all sorts of tricks, calculated to amuse the crowd. They used to take their stations at the cross roads, clothed in grotesque habits, and drawing together a motley assemblage, by the most extravagant actions, prepared their audience for the verses they recited. The Troubadours, who had heretofore occupied so exalted a station, were at length, confounded with the Jongleurs, and the most distinguished amongst them, when they presented themselves at the court of a prince or baron, were introduced under that name. The profession was thus degraded and reduced, to that of mere ballad singers and mountebanks, and that genius which might have given effect to the loftiest inspiration of the muse, was directed into other, but perhaps, more useful channels.

The *Trouveres* are principally known as the composers and

reciters of tales and romances. These romances were imbued with all the spirit of chivalry which burned with so much ardor at this period, and gave that peculiar cast of character which distinguishes the age, and which contributed to the subsequent refinement of manners. The romantic nature of the institutions of chivalry, gave full scope to the ingenuity of the poet, while the valiant exploits of courteous and gallant knights, in their contests with the Moors of Spain, and the Saracens of the east, furnished an inexhaustible fund for the exercise of the imagination. The true and courteous knight was a character held in universal esteem; by the statutes of chivalry, the love of God was the first virtue, and devotion to the fair the second. The true devotion of a knight was delicate and refined. He did not expect the favor of his mistress until he had proved himself worthy of her by deeds of arms—he fought to gain her smiles, and when he was about to attack his enemy, he first implored the help of God, and then invoked the name of his mistress. The object of his passion reigned with absolute dominion; in the antiquated language of Gower:

What thynge she bid me do, I do,
And where she bid me go, I go,
And when she likes to call, I come;
I serve, I bow, I look, I lowte,
My eye followeth her about.
What so she will, so will I;
When she would sit, I kneel by,
And when she stands then will I stand,
And when she taketh her work in hand
Of wevying or of embroiderie,
Then can I but muse and prie,
Upon her fingers long and small.

The romances of chivalry may be divided into three classes; the first celebrated the exploits of king Arthur, and the knights of the round table, who were renowned for their noble daring. The chivalric deeds of Arthur and his knights, were the subjects of numerous romances. The second class is that, wherein the achievements of Charlemagne and his paladins, were celebrated. The gallant exploits of his knights, and the splendid victories of Charlemagne, furnished ample materials, and full scope for the exercise of genius, and the stretch of fancy. The third class is that founded upon the adventures of a celebrated knight, Amadis of Gaul. The first romance under this title was written

by Vasco Lobiera, a Portuguese, who lived in the thirteenth century. This work became so celebrated, and had so many imitators, that this class was distinguished by the name of the "Amadises." This fondness for romance by feeding the flame, kept alive the spirit of chivalry, which animated the heroes of the crusades, and no doubt inspired many a deed of valor. The heroes of the crusades, whatever may be thought of the justice of their cause, had ever present to their view, the deeds of an Arthur, a Charlemagne, an Amadis, an Orlando, or a Rinaldo, and their great ambition was to be equally renowned.

The *Trouveres* did not confine themselves to romances; they indulged in compositions of songs and odes, and tales in rhyme called *fabliaux*. Their *fabliaux* were pleasant tales, suited to the taste of the times, abounding in wit, although sometimes of not the most refined and delicate character. These tales, although composed in rhyme, bore some resemblance, at least in their general features, to the tales of Boccacio, so celebrated in an after age. Some of them excited much interest at the time, and have formed the ground work of many modern dramas. The odes of the *Trouveres* are not remarkable for their excellence. The most celebrated lyric poet amongst them is Thibaud III, count of Champagne, who flourished about the beginning of the thirteenth century. His odes seem to have been indebted for their celebrity as much to the princely dignity of their author, as their intrinsic merit.

During the period under review was introduced that species of drama distinguished by the names of sacred comedy, mysteries and moralities. These dramas were intended to represent the great events of the christian religion, and characters were introduced, and circumstances from the sacred scriptures represented, the very mention of which is sufficient to shock the sensibility of those who possess a proper veneration for sacred things. The representation took place in the church itself, in the very temple of the living God, and the principal actors were those who called themselves his ministers. These dramas were too long to be represented without interruption; they were therefore continued from day to day. In one, entitled the "Mystery of the Passion," a great number of characters are introduced, among whom are the three persons of the trinity, six angels, the

twelve apostles and six devils. The following extract, in which St. John is introduced, will afford an idea of their character:

Abyas. Though fallen be man's sinful line,
Holy prophets! it is writ,
Christ shall come to ransom it,
And by doctrine and by sign
Bring them to his grace divine.
Wherefore, seeing now the force
Of thy high deeds, thy grave discourse,
And virtues shown of great esteem
That thou art he we surely mean.

St. John. I am not Messiah!—No!
At the feet of Christ I bow.

Elyachim. Why, then, wanderest thou
Naked, in this wilderness?
Say! what faith dost thou possess?
And to whom thy service paid?

Bannanyas. Thou assemblest, it is said,
In these lonely woods, a crowd
To hear thy voice proclaiming loud
Like that of our most holy men.
Art thou a king in Israel, then?
Knowest thou the laws and prophecies?
What art thou? say!

Nathan. Thou dost advise
Messiah is come down below.
Hast seen him? say, how dost thou know,
Or art thou he?

Saint John. I answer no!

Nachor. Who art thou? art Elias then?
Perhaps Elias?

Saint John. No!—

Bannanyas. Again!
Who art thou? what thy name? express!
For never surely shall we guess.
Thou art the prophet.

Saint John. I am not.

Elyachim. Who and what art thou? tell us what!
That true answer we may bear
To our lords, who sent us here
To learn thy name and mission.

Saint John.——*Ego*
Vox clamantis in deserto.
A voice, a solitary cry
In the desert paths am I!
Smooth the paths, and make them meet,
For the great Redeemer's feet,
Him, who brought by our misdoing,
Comes for this foul world's renewing.

The baptism of Christ is thus described: "Jesus enters the waters of Jordan, all naked, and Saint John takes some of the water in his hand and throws it on the head of Jesus, saying,

Sir, you now baptised are,
As it suits my simple skill,
Not the lofty rank you fill;
Unmeet for such great service I;
Yet my God, so debonair
All that 's wanting will supply."

One of the scenes between Lucifer and his kindred spirits is equally curious.

Berith. Who he is I cannot tell—
This Jesus;—but I know full well
That in all the worlds that be
There is not such a one as he.
Who it is that gave him birth
I know not, nor from whence on earth
He came, or what great devil taught him,
But in no evil have I caught him;
Nor know I any vice he hath.
Satan. Haro! but you may make me wroth,
When such dismal knews I hear.
Berith. Wherefore so?
Satan. ——— Because I fear
He will make my kingdom less.
Leave him in the wilderness,
And let us return to hell
To Lucifer our tale to tell,
And to ask his sound advice.
Berith. The imps are ready in a trice;
Better escort cannot be.
Lucifer. Is it Satan that I see,
And Berith, coming in a passion?
Asfaroth. Master let me lay the lash on,
Here 's the thing to do the deed.
Lucifer. Please to moderate your speed,
To lash behind and lash before ye,
Ere you hear them tell their story
Whether shame they bring, or glory.

These comedies, although occupying from three to forty days in their representation, were highly esteemed, and attracted crowds of admiring auditors. The success which attended the representation of the "Mystery of the Passion," induced other writers to attempt the same style of composition, and in a short time, almost every incident of the life of Christ was represented upon the stage, and, in order to give greater effect to the res-

pective scenes, the stage was divided into three parts, the first representing Heaven, the second Earth, and the third Hell. In the decoration of the stage they employed all their skill and ingenuity. Heaven was represented with all the glory and splendor the imagination could attach to it, as a place of eternal joy and happiness, whilst Hell was represented in all its horrors. Representations of this sort, were calculated to produce a wonderful effect upon the feelings of an ignorant and superstitious multitude, and if they did not increase their veneration for the Christian religion and its sacred mysteries, they, perhaps, excited their hopes, and alarmed their fears, and produced some amendment.

We have, in this chapter, presented a rapid sketch of the state of literature from the beginning of the eleventh, to the thirteenth century; and although this period produced but few writers whose works have been preserved, or are worthy of preservation, except as objects of curiosity, yet, we here discover the dawning of that light which broke forth in the following century, and after being for a short time obscured, again appeared with renovated splendor in the fifteenth century.*

CHAPTER XIX.

History of literature from the middle of the thirteenth century, to the revival of letters in the fifteenth century.

The learning and indefatigable exertions of Bacon and others, whom we have already mentioned, in the pursuit of knowledge, discovered new sources of information, and laid open new fields for the lovers of science and philosophy to explore, and the admirers of elegant literature to wander through. They were followed by several learned men, who were distin-

* Henry's Hist. of Gr. Brit.; Enfield's Hist. of Phil.; Hughes' Life of Abelard; Spencer's Fairy Queen; Mills' Hist. of Chiv.; Mills' Hist. of the Crusades; Sismondi's Lit. of the South of Eur.; La Harpe Cours de Lit.; Sismondi's Hist. Rep. Ital.; Beattie's Essay on Fab. and Rom.; Hoole's Ariosto.

guished by peculiar appellations, expressive of their particular attainments, or qualities of mind; thus *John Dun Scotus* was called the *most subtle doctor*, on account of his acuteness and subtilty in controversy. *William of Clermont*, from the resolution and perseverance with which he pursued the study of the philosophy of the times, was called the *resolute doctor*, and *Walter Burley*, one of the preceptors of Edward III, wrote with a perspicuity so much superior to any of his contemporaries, that he was called the *perspicuous doctor*. Of these, and some others of the age, we will give a brief sketch.

Contemporary with Roger Bacon, was *Michael Scot*, a native of Scotland. He received the rudiments of his education in his native land, and afterwards studied at Oxford. He subsequently visited Paris where he obtained the highest academical honors. He became so celebrated for learning, that he was invited to the court of the emperor Frederick II, who employed him to make Latin translations of the works of Aristotle and other philosophers of Greece. For this task he was extremely well qualified, because of his familiarity with the philosophy of the Greeks, particularly with that of Aristotle, and his knowledge of the Greek and Arabic languages. At this time the study of astrology and alchemy engaged the atttention of the most learned men, and Scot not only employed no inconsiderable portion of his time, in these vain and unprofitable pursuits, but wrote a book on the nature of the sun and moon, which, in the language of alchymists, signify gold and silver. Scot is said by Mackenzie in his "Lives of the Scots writers," to have been "one of the greatest philosophers, mathematicians, physicians and linguists of the age, and, had he not been too much addicted to the vain studies of judicial astrology, alchymy, physiognomy and chiromancy, he would have deserved better of the republic of letters. His too great curiosity in these matters made the vulgar look upon him as a magician; though none speaks or writes more respectfully of God and religion than he does." Scot returned to Britain about the year 1250, and died A. D. 1290.

John Dun Scotus was born about A. D. 1265, but the place of his birth is uncertain; England, Scotland and Ireland, have each contended for the honor. He entered, when very young, a monastery of the Franciscans at Newcastle. The brotherhood discovering a remarkable quickness of genius and superiority of

intellect, sent him to Oxford to prosecute the studies then taught in that seat of science. He soon distinguished himself among his fellow students, and the rapidity with which he made himself acquainted with the various subjects of his studies. So successful was he in the acquirement of knowledge, that A. D. 1301, he was promoted to the distinction of theological professor in the university. For this station he appears to have been well suited, and his lectures attracted immense crowds. In A. D. 1304, he removed to Paris, where he defended the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, which was impugned by the divines of that city, with such acuteness of reasoning and strength of argument, that the university of Paris bestowed on him the title of *the subtle doctor*. Scotus was at first a follower in theology of *Thomas Aquinas*, but differing from his master concerning the efficacy of divine grace, he formed a distinct sect, known by the name of *Scotists*. It is said of him, that "he described the divine nature, as if he had seen God; the attributes of celestial spirits, as if he had been an angel; the felicities of a future state, as if he had enjoyed them; and the ways of Providence, as if he had penetrated into all its secrets." Scotus died in the 44th year of his age. His works, which were published in twelve folio volumes, are now regarded as mere objects of curiosity—as specimens of the literature and philosophy of the age in which he lived.

William Occam, another learned man of the age, was one of the disciples of *Scotus*, and the founder of a sect called *Occamists*. He was born A. D. 1280, and first prosecuted his studies at Oxford, and afterwards at Paris, as appears to have been the custom of the day. Although one of the disciples of Scotus, he did not yield implicit faith to all his doctrines and opinions, but afterwards opposed some of his leading doctrines with great warmth. Occam was a man of independent spirit, and boldly stepped forth in opposition to the high claims advanced by Boniface VIII, in which that ambitious pontiff maintained, that "all emperors, kings and princes are subject to the supreme authority of the pope, in temporals as well as in spirituals," and that God has established the authority of the pope "over kings and kingdoms, to root up, to pull down, to destroy, to scatter, to build up, and to plant in his name and by his doctrine." The work he published on this subject is entitled "On the Ecclesias-

tic and Secular Power." Being protected by the emperor Louis of Bavaria, he withstood the rage of the Pontiffs who denounced him, but on the death of the emperor, he was obliged to renounce his heterodox opinions, and swear implicit submission to the decisions of the papal chair. He was no doubt a man of great learning, and was honored with the title of the *Invincible doctor*.

At this period there were a number of British historians, but few of whom were remarkable for their talents or abilities as historians—they were annalists, or writers of chronicles, whose works were barren of interest. Among them, however, *Matthew Paris* deserves a place, on account of his merit as a faithful historian, whose works are still referred to by historians of our own times. So little is known, however, of his personal history, that we are not informed, either of the time or place of his birth. It appears that he took the habit of a monk, in the abbey of St. Albans, A. D. 1217. In this abbey he continued many years, enjoying a high reputation for learning, piety and virtue, and was on a friendly and familiar footing with king Henry III. He is said to have been "an elegant poet, an eloquent orator, an acute logician, a subtle philosopher, a solid divine, a celebrated historian, and, which crowned the whole, a man justly famous for the purity, integrity, innocence, and simplicity of his manners." He was a voluminous writer; a great portion of his works treated on theological subjects, which have shared the fate of those of many of his contemporaries. His greatest work is entitled "Historia Major," and contains the history of England from the time of the Norman conquest, A. D. 1066, to the 43d year of Henry III, A. D. 1259, at which time the author died. In this work he censures without ceremony, and in the plainest language, the vices and follies of persons of the highest rank and greatest power, and the firmness of his character is plainly indicated, by the bold manner in which he attacks and exposes, the boundless profligacy and abandoned perfidy of the papal court, then in the very zenith of its power and pretensions.

Having mentioned a few of the learned men of the thirteenth century, let us for a few moments, turn our attention to the different schools and colleges, established or revived, in different parts of Europe. A desire of knowledge having been excited,

which spread among the laity, schemes were formed for the promotion of the study of elegant literature and improving the public taste. Schools were established in the principal cities by public bounty, or private munificence, in which young men of narrow circumstances had an opportunity of being educated in the different branches of literature and science, as well as the abstract doctrines of theology, and the metaphysical subtleties of philosophy. About the year 1225, Frederick, king of Naples and Sicily, having ascended the imperial throne, founded the university of Naples, and established professorships of law, theology, medicine and grammar, to fill which he invited the most learned men of Italy. He conferred upon it important privileges, calculated, by a proper exercise, to promote the great end in view, and extend its usefulness. Being under the royal patronage it flourished, and soon could boast of numerous students; and in order to augment the number of professors and scholars, Frederick ordered those belonging to the university of Bologna, to attach themselves to that of Naples. This order was issued at a time when the former city labored under the displeasure of Frederick; the university, however, paid no attention to his commands, or his menaces, so that both institutions were in existence at the same time, each contributing their exertions for the promotion of knowledge.

The academy of Paris, which had been long established, about this time extended the sphere of its usefulness, and teachers and professors were appointed in every branch of learning then known—they were not confined to theology and its kindred branches. Its teachers became celebrated for their erudition, and the fame of the school being spread abroad, attracted a greater number of students than any other institution of learning, with the exception, perhaps, of some of the schools of Spain. The academy of Paris being thus distinguished, assumed the title of *university*, and the professors were divided into four classes, according to the branches they professed, which classes were called *faculties*. In each of these faculties, a doctor was chosen by the suffrages of his colleagues, to preside during a certain time, and the title of *Dean* was given to those who successively filled that office. The head of the university, or the presiding officer of the whole, was called the *Chancellor*, which office was usually filled by the archbishop of Paris.

The examination of such as were desirous of being admitted as professors in any of the faculties, was long and tedious; they were obliged to give undoubted proofs of their learning and capacity, before they were received as public teachers. This examination was called the academical course, and was designed to prevent the multiplication of incompetent teachers. An admirable regulation! worthy of imitation at the present day, when so many take upon themselves the education of youth, who are totally unqualified, and incompetent to discharge its simplest duties, and who degrade a profession which ought to occupy an elevated rank.

Attached to the university of Paris, was the celebrated college of *Sorbonne*, which was founded A. D. 1250, by an opulent man, named *Robert de Sorbonne*, and called after him. This college was founded, endowed and set apart for the study of divinity—the most celebrated theologians were appointed to fill its chairs, who, in process of time, gained so great a reputation for piety, wisdom, and soundness of faith and doctrine, that the most difficult and controverted points were submitted to their decision—indeed, the doctors of the Sorbonne were at length considered, almost as infallible in their judgments, as the pope himself.

In England the same desire was generally manifested for the extension of learning; indeed, there never had been so general an application to study. The university of Oxford, founded by Alfred, had experienced many disasters, but had recovered from them all, and was now in a flourishing condition. The city of Oxford suffered greatly by the incursions of the Danes, and afterwards by the Normans, and about the middle of the twelfth century was reduced to ashes by king Stephen. The professors and students of the university were dispersed, but returned again in the reign of Henry II, who was a patron of learning, and used his power and interest to promote it. In the reign of king John, a circumstance occurred which threatened serious consequences. One of the students accidentally killed a woman, and made his escape for fear of punishment. A mob immediately assembled and surrounded the university, but not finding the offender, they seized upon three other students, whom they afterwards put to death, by order of king John. The professors and students immediately left Oxford, and complaining to the pope, he issued a bull laying the city under an interdict, and

prohibiting any person from teaching in the university; but, about five years after, the interdict was taken off, and the city and university being restored to their privileges, upwards of four thousand members were enrolled in the list of students—an astonishing number in that age, to be devoted to the pursuits of learning, in a single institution. The university of Cambridge, founded at a very early period, perhaps before that of Oxford, after suffering also from the invasions of the Danes and Normans, became equally distinguished with the sister institution, and produced her quota of men of genius and learning.

Until after the middle of the thirteenth century, the professors and students of the two universities, were accustomed to lodge and study in private houses, which they rented from the citizens. This was attended with many inconveniences, and gave rise to frequent quarrels between the scholars and the citizens. To remove these inconveniences, and prevent similar quarrels in future, some liberal and generous patrons of learning, purchased or built large houses for the accommodation of the teachers and scholars, who occupied them without paying rent. This was the first step towards the founding of colleges, and between the middle of the thirteenth and the middle of the fourteenth century, several colleges and halls were erected and endowed. At Oxford the following were erected, namely: University college, Baliol college, Merton college, Exeter college, Oriel college, Queen's college, and New college; and at Cambridge, Peter house, Michael college, University hall, King's hall, Clare hall, Pembroke hall, Corpus Christi college, Trinity hall, and Gonvil hall. All these colleges were erected during the time above-mentioned, and contained a vast number of students.

Besides the two universities of Oxford and Cambridge, various other seminaries of learning were established, some of which were attached to cathedrals and religious houses. These establishments were designed to instruct the young monks, in those branches of learning that were necessary to their decent performance of the services of the church, particularly in the Latin language and church music. In these schools they were carefully instructed in writing; when they had acquired a fine hand, they were employed in transcribing books for the use of the church and the library. In these schools were also taught

rhetoric, logic, theology, medicine, and the civil and common law. There were also schools established in the chief cities and towns not connected with churches or monasteries, but under the direction of independent teachers; these schools multiplied so exceedingly, that about the middle of the thirteenth century, there were upwards of two hundred in the single city of Oxford. "On holidays," says a contemporary writer, "it was usual for these schools to hold public assemblies in the churches, in which the scholars engaged in demonstrative or logical disputations, some using enthymems, and others perfect syllogisms; some aiming at nothing but to gain the victory, and make an ostentatious display of their acuteness, while others had the investigation of truth in view. Artful sophists on these occasions acquired great applause; some by a prodigious inundation and flow of words, others by their specious, but fallacious arguments. After the disputations, other scholars delivered rhetorical declamations, in which they observed all the rules of art, and neglected no topic of persuasion. Even the younger boys in the different schools contended against each other in verse, about the principles of grammar and the preterites and supines of verbs."

One of the great men of the fourteenth century was the celebrated *John Wickliff*, who was born A. D. 1324. He was educated at Oxford, where he merited and received the highest honors, and was advanced to the professorship of divinity. His lectures were attended by crowded audiences, attracted as well by the eloquence of the lecturer, as the doctrines he advanced. In these discourses he attacked with the utmost severity the mendicant friars, and with fearless spirit assailed the court of Rome itself, on account of its exorbitant pretensions, as well in the temporal concerns of kingdoms, as in spiritual matters. Having entered into holy orders, he propagated his opinions, with untiring zeal, from the sacred desk itself. In his writings he exposed the hypocricy, corruptions and vices of the clergy, which are thus described by Chaucer, a contemporary poet:

They use whoredom and harlottrie,
And covetise, and pompe and pride,
And sloth, and wrathe, and eke envie,
And siwine tinne by every side.
As goddes godines no man tell might,
Ne write, ne speke, ne think in thought,

So ther faslshed, and ther unright
Maie no man telle that ere God wrought.
Chaucer's Plowman's Tale.

Wickliffe was so successful in assailing the corruptions of the church, and exposing the vices of his clerical brethren, that he opened the eyes of the people, and it is said that more than one half of the people of England became his followers, and embraced his doctrines. An innovator so bold and daring, could not escape the notice of the church of Rome; Wickliff was therefore deprived of his office in the university of Oxford, and A. D. 1377, Pope Gregory XI ordered the archbishop of Canterbury, to summon a council at London to take cognisance of his heresies and his manifold offences against papal infallibility. The death of Gregory, which happened soon after, and the subsequent schisms in the church itself, prevented the trial of Wickliff at the time contemplated. The process was not revived until A. D. 1385, when two councils were held, one at London, the other at Oxford, and his opinions were condemned as heretical. Wickliff died A. D. 1387, leaving behind him many followers, who were known by the name of *Lollards*. Although he died in peace, his remains were not suffered to rest quietly in the grave, but thirteen years after his bones were taken up and publicly burnt—a warning to all heretics! His writings were burnt wherever they could be found. Two hundred volumes were burnt at Prague in Bohemia, and a great number at Oxford, but with all their exertions and zeal, many copies escaped, and no doubt contributed in some degree, to that glorious reformation to which the christian world is indebted, for its liberation from the shackles of superstition, and for that liberty of conscience which is one of the safeguards of freedom. We will conclude our notice of this celebrated reformer with the following character: "Dr. John Wickliff was a man, than whom the christian world in these last ages has not produced a greater. He excelled all his contemporaries in all the different branches of theological learning, and in the knowledge of the civil and common law. His heart was inflamed with the most ardent love of God, and goodness to man; which excited him to the most strenuous efforts to restore the church to its primitive purity. The eminence of his piety and virtue his greatest adversaries never dared to call in question, and to the superiority of his natural

and acquired abilities, they have been compelled to bear testimony."*

After this sketch of the institutions of learning in existance, at the period which forms the subject of the present chapter, and a notice of some of the distinguished writers of the times in philosophy and theology, we will direct the attention of our readers to the contemplation of the more beautiful and interesting parterre of poetry and elegant literature, which we will now find flourishing in the once classic soil of Italy,

> ——— the garden of the world, the home
> Of all art yields and nature can decree.

For this purpose we must carry our readers back to the beginning of the thirteenth century.

About the time of Frederick, king of Naples and Sicily, afterwards emperor of Germany, the Italian language began to be cultivated and improved. It was found from its harmony and copiousness to be suited as well to express the noblest and sublimest sentiments of our nature, as the gentler feelings of the heart—and as well adapted to the loftiest declamations of the orator, as the softer strains of poetry. Frederick was himself a poet, and composed verses, after the manner of the Troubadours, when very young. His prime minister, Pietro delle Vigne, and the most distinguished men of his court, in imitation of their sovereign, and encouraged by his example, courted the muses, and produced songs and other poems, which were much esteemed for their tenderness of expression, and like the verses of the Troubadours were generally in praise of some peerless beauty, or celebrated some renowned feat of arms.

The creation of Italian poetry may be said to be the work, in a considerable degree, of the kings of Sicily and their subjects, but it was brought to greater perfection by Dante, who has been styled the "Father of Italian poetry." Before the time of Dante, a number of Italian poets flourished who disputed with each other for the prize. Two of these rose above the rest, and alike superior to the flatteries of princes or the blandishment of courts, they acquired a high reputation by the force of genius alone. One of them, *Hugh Catola*, employed his talents in combating the tyranny and corruption of princes, and inveighing against

* Henry's Hist. of Gr. Brit.; Mosh. Ecc. His.; Enfield's Hist. of Phil.

their vices, but none of his productions have been preserved. Of the other, *Sordello of Mantua*, the writers of his time speak with sentiments of profound respect, but without entering into any detail of the particulars of his life—indeed his history seems to be involved in great mystery. He is said to have been of noble birth, and to have distinguished himself by deeds of arms. Dante has immortalized his name by introducing him in his immortal poem. When about to enter purgatory, with Virgil, he sees his shade at some distance.

"We soon approach'd it. O thou Lombard spirit!
How didst thou stand in high abstracted mood,
Scarce moving with slow dignity thine eyes.
It spoke not aught but let us onward pass,
Eying us as a lion on his watch.
But Virgil, with entreaty mild, advanc'd,
Requesting it to shew the best ascent.
It answer to his question none return'd;
But of our country and our kind of life
Demanded. When my courteous guide began,
"Mantua," the solitary shadow quick
Rose tow'rds us from the place in which it stood,
And cry'd, "Mantuan! I am thy countryman,
Sordello." Each the other then embrac'd.

Carey's Dante Purg. Can. VI. 70.

Dante seizes upon the opportunity offered by this friendly recognition of the Mantuan bards, to apostrophize the Italian republics, on the disorders which distract and divide them. This apostrophe has been much admired for the spirit it breathes, as well as the eloquent appeal to his countrymen, and is regarded by admirers of Italian poetry as one of the most beautiful and striking passages in the poem.

Ah, slavish Italy! thou inn of grief!
Vessel without a pilot in loud storm!
Lady no longer of fair provinces,
But brothel house impure! this gentle spirit,
Ev'n from the pleasant sound of his dear land
Was prompt to greet a fellow citizen
With such glad cheer: while now thy living ones
In thee abide not without war; and one
Malicious gnaws another; ah, of those
Whom the same wall and the same moat contains.
Seek, wretched one! around thy sea coasts wide;
Then homeward to thy bosom turn; and mark,
If any part of thee sweet peace enjoy.
What boots it, that thy reins Justinian's hand
Refitted, if thy saddle be impress'd?

Nought doth now but aggravate thy shame.
Ah people! thou obedient still shouldst live,
And in the saddle let thy Cæsar sit,
If well thou mark'st that which God command.
Ibid. Purg. Can. vi. 75.

Dante was born at Florence A. D. 1265, of a distinguished family. The father of Dante dying while he was very young, he was placed under the care of Brunetto Latini, a philosopher of considerable distinction. He applied himself with so much diligence that he acquired a profound knowledge of the sciences then cultivated, and as much of ancient literature as it was possible to acquire, at a period when the art of printing was unknown, and books were multiplied with so much labour and difficulty. He also studied in the universities of Padua and Bologna; and when much advanced in life, and in exile, he visited that of Paris, and went through a course of theological study. Dante was early remarked for that superior genius and political talent which have given him an illustrious name among modern poets. He filled the highest offices of his native city, and it is said was no less than fourteen times ambassador to foreign states—honors and distinctions which seldom fall to the lot of poets. He was also a soldier, and distinguished himself in several battles, particularly in the battle of Campaldino, when the Florentines gained a complete, but dearly bought victory, over the Aretini. In the following year he also distinguished himself in a battle against the Pisans.

During that period, when almost all Italy was torn to pieces by the contending factions of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, and when it was impossible for any one to be neuter, Dante joined the standard of the former; and when Florence became the theatre of continual quarrels and bloodshed between the *Neri* and the *Bianchi*, two parties into which the Florentines were divided, Dante, who had attached himself to the Bianchi, was condemned to banishment, his property confiscated, and his house destroyed. After several unsuccessful attempts, in conjunction with other exiles, to gain possession of their native city, he was destined to wander over Italy in abject poverty. At length, when the sentence of perpetual banishment was confirmed, he found a friend and protector in Guido Novello da Polenta, an Italian noble of liberal and generous mind, a protector of learning and himself a poet, and through his assistance he fixed his residence at the city

of Ravenna. In his immortal poem he introduces his great-great grand father Cacciaguida, who predicts his exile, and the calamities he would suffer;

> ——————— such as driv'n out
> From Athens, by his cruel stepdame's wiles
> Hyppolytus departed; such must thou
> Depart from Florence.———————
> ———————Thou shalt leave each thing
> Belov'd most dearly: this is the first shaft
> Shot from the bow of exile. Thou shalt prove
> How salt the savour is of others bread;
> How hard the passage, to descend and climb
> By other's stairs. But that shall gall the most
> Will be the worthless and vile company,
> With whom thou must be thrown into these straits.
> For all ungrateful, impious all, and mad
> Shall turn against thee: but in a little while,
> Theirs and not thine, shall be the crimson'd brow.
>
> *Careys Dante, Pur. Can.* xvii. 45.

Talents such as his could not long remain in obscurity: it was, therefore, but a short time before he rose to consideration, and was appointed to negotiate a treaty with the Venitians, but being unable to obtain an audience of the Doge and senate, he returned to Ravenna, where he died A. D. 1321, and was interred with great magnificence by his patron Guido, who pronounced his funeral oration. The Florentines, after he had paid the debt of nature, became sensible of his great merit, and the injustice they had done him, and, like the Athenians, who demanded the body of Euripides from Archelaus, king of Macedonia, made several attempts to procure his bones, but without success. The attempt was often renewed, and even the request of Leo the tenth, to a similar effect was refused.

> Ungrateful Florence! Dante sleeps afar
> Like Scipio, buried by the upbraiding slave;
> Thy factions, in their worse than civil war,
> Proscribed the bard whose name forever more,
> Their children's children would in vain adore,
> With the remorse of ages.
>
> *Childe Har. Can.* v. 57.

Although his countrymen failed in procuring his bones to be interred within their walls, they struck medals and erected statues in his honor, and even instituted a professorship for the purpose of lecturing upon and illustrating his poems. To this chair

the celebrated Boccacio was first appointed, with a salary of one hundred florins per annum.

Although the merits of Dante are variously estimated by modern citizens, he is justly entitled to the distinction of "Father of Italian poetry." Before his time the studies of those who devoted themselves to literary pursuits, were almost exclusively directed to philosophy and theology; all else was esteemed unworthy the attention of those who assumed the character of philosophers, and undertook to be the teachers of mankind. From the time of Claudian, who flourished in the reign of Honorius, about the beginning of the fifth century, a period of nine hundred years, no poet of distinguished reputation had appeared—none whose name or works are worth remembering, if we except the effusions of the Troubadours, before noticed. Dante was unacquainted with the Greek language, but was perfectly familiar with the Latin, the language in which all literary works were at that time composed, as if the vernacular tongue was incapable of conveying an authors meaning. Dante had taste enough to discover the beauties of his native tongue, and his genius readily perceived the capability of the soft and sonorous language of Tuscany, to all the purposes of poetic composition. He was the author of several poetical works; his fame, however, rests upon his "Vision," or as it is called *Divina Comedia*, or *Divine Comedy*, in which he conducts his readers through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise. This poem is divided into one hundred Cantos, in which he exhibits a variety of characters, of all ages and conditions, in the various stages of happiness and misery, according to the religious creed of the church to which he belonged. Its great excellence consists in "elevation of sentiment to which the compressed diction and emphatic cadences of the measure admirably correspond. We read him not as an amusing poet, but as a master of moral wisdom, with reverance and awe. Fresh from the deep and serious, though somewhat barren studies of philosophy, and schooled in the severer discipline of experience, he has made his poem a mirror of his mind and life."

This poem recites the events of a journey, the poet imagines himself to have taken through hell, purgatory and paradise. He travels through the two first kingdoms of the dead under the conduct of Virgil, and through paradise under that of Beatrice, whom he had loved in his youth, and who died A. D. 1290. The

two poets set out together and arriving at the gates of Hell are admitted to the dreary regions where

> ——————sighs, with lamentations and loud moans
> Resound through the air pierc'd by no star.

They traverse these gloomy abodes, until they reach the "woeful tide of Acheron," over which they are transported in the boat of Charon whose

> ——————demoniac form,
> With eyes of burning coal, collects them all,
> Beck'ning, and each that lingers, with his oar
> Strikes. ——————————

Having crossed the gloomy Acheron, our traveller reaches the first circle of Hell, where he finds the souls of many, who for want of baptism, are not permitted to enter paradise.

> There Socrates and Plato both I mark'd
> Nearest to him in rank, Democritus
> Who sets the world at chance, Diogenes,
> With Heroditus, and Empedocles
> And Anaxagoras, and Thales sage,
> Zeno, and Dioscorides well read
> In Nature's secret lore. Orpheus I mark'd
> And Linus, Tully and moral Seneca
> Euclid and Ptolemy, Hippocrates
> Galenus, Avicen, and him who made
> That commentary vast, Averroes.
>
> *Cureys Dante, Hell. Can.* iv. 130.

In the fifth canto he describes the second circle of Hell, where

> ——————Minos stands
> Grinning with ghastly features ——————

Here he witnesses the punishment of those whose offences were not of the deepest die, and who were treated with some share of indulgence. Here he encounters the shade of Francesca, daughter of his friend and patron Guido da Polenta. Francesca was given in marriage to Lanciotto Malatesta, a man of extraordinary courage, but deformed in his person. His brother Poalo, who possessed the graces which he wanted, engaged the affections of Francesca, and being taken in adultery they were both put to death by the enraged husband. Dante thus accosts her;

——— Francesca! your sad fate
Even to tears my grief and pity moves.
But tell me; in the time of your sweet sighs,
By what, and how love granted, that ye knew
Your yet uncertain wishes? She replied:
No greater grief than to remember days
Of joy, when misery is at hand. That kens
They beam'd instruction. Yet so eagerly
If thou art bent to know the primal root
From whence our love got being, I will do
As one, who weeps and tells his tale; one day,
For our delight we read of Lancelot,
How him love thrall'd. Alone we were, and no
Suspicion near us. Ofttimes by that reading
Our eyes were drawn together, and the hue
Fled from our altered cheek. But at one poin
Alone we fell. When of that smile we read,
The wish'd smile, so rapturously kiss'd
By one so deep in love, then he who ne'er
From me shall separate, at once my lips
All trembling kiss'd. The book and writer both
Were love's purveyors. In its leaves that day
We read no more,"

Ibid, Can. v. 113.

This passage has been particularly admired, for the delicacy and sensibility with which the unfortunate Francesca intimates her guilt, and the interest of the narative is increased when we remember, that she was the daughter of the liberal friend and generous protector of the author.

In the sixth Canto he gives the following description of Cerberus, who, according to heathen mythology, guarded the entrance to the palace of Pluto.

Cerberus, cruel monster, fierce and strange,
Through his wide threefold throat, barks as a dog
Over the multitude immersed beneath.
His eyes glare crimson, black his unctuous beard,
His belly large, and claw'd the hands, with which
He tears the spirits, flays them, and their limbs
Piecemeal disparts. Howling there spread, as curs,
Under the rainy deluge, with one side
The other sceening, oft they roll them round,
A wretched, godless crew. When that great worm
Descried us, savage Cerberus, op'd
His jaws, and the fangs show'd us; not a limb
Of him but trembled.

Ibid, Can. vi. 12.

Under the guidance of his Mantuan friend, he visits every part of the infernal regions, which he minutely describes, according

to the opinions then entertained—he converses freely with the shades he meets, learns from them the causes of their confinement and punishment in this place of horror—he witnesses their torments, which he describes in language that makes the very blood run cold at the recital. But, among the host whose crimes had condemned them to endless and excruciating torture, none suffer more than heretics—those who were bold enough to deny the infallibility of the pope, and dispute some of the dogmas of the church. This sufficiently marks the temper of the times, and shows that, whatever disposition existed to promote polite literature, there was no charity for those who ventured to think and speak, upon religious subjects, in a manner at variance with the established creed. These hopeless sinners were confined in tombs burning with intense fire;

> Their lids all hung suspended; and beneath,
> From them forth issued lamentable moans,
> Such as the sad and tortur'd well might raise.
> I thus: "Master, say who are these, interr'd
> Within these vaults, of whom distinct we hear
> The dolorous sighs." He answer thus return'd:
> "The arch-heretics are here, accompanied
> By every sect their followers; and much more,
> Than thou believ'st, the tombs are freighted: like
> With like is buried; and the monuments
> Are different in degrees of heat." *Ibid, Can.* ix. 119.

Having traversed the first region of the dead, he emerges from the gloomy abode of suffering, and enters Purgatory, where the souls of the elect are chastened by long sufferings, before they are permitted to enter the gates of Paradise. Of his entrance into Purgatory he thus speaks:

> Here, O ye hallow'd Nine! for in your train
> I follow, here the deaden'd strain revive;
> Nor let Calliope refuse to sound
> A somewhat higher song, of that loud tone,
> Which when the wretched birds of chattering note
> Had heard, they of forgiveness lost all hope.
> Sweet hue of eastern sapphire, that was spread
> O'er the serene aspect of the pure air,
> High up as the first circle, to mine eyes
> Unwonted joy renew'd, soon as I scap'd
> Forth from the atmosphere of deadly gloom
> That had mine eyes and bosom fill'd with grief.
> The radiant planet, that to love invites,
> Made all the orient laugh, and veil'd beneath
> The Pisces' light, that in his escort came.
> *Ibid, Pur. Can.* i. 7.

Having passed through the various departments of Purgatory, where he meets with many of those celebrated men who had adorned Italy, and who were going through that state of probation which is to fit them for their future residence in the regions of bliss, he arrives at the terrestrial paradise, which he finds situated on the summit of a mountain. He is conducted through Paradise by Beatrice, whose descent from Heaven he describes in the following beautiful language.

I have beheld, ere now, at break of day,
The eastern clime all roseate; and the sky
Oppos'd, one deep and beautiful serene;
And the sun's face so shaded, and with mists
Attemper'd, at his rising, that the eye
Longwhile endur'd the sight: thus, in a cloud,
Of flowers, that from those hands angelic rose,
And down within and outside of the car
Fell showering, in white veil with olive wreath'd,
A virgin in my view appear'd, beneath
Green mantle, rob'd in hue of living flame:
And o'er my spirit, that so long a time
Had from her presence felt no shudd'ring dread,
Albeit my eyes discern'd her not, there mov'd
A hidden virtue from her, at whose touch
The power of ancient love was strong within me.

Ibid, Pur. Can. xxx. 23.

He is conducted by Beatrice through the different abodes of the blest, and their several states of beatitude are painted with the same glowing pencil. He first visits the moon, the first residence of the blest, which he finds inhabited by the souls of those who had pronounced vows of celibacy and religious seclusion, but who had been compelled to renounce them, as in the case of Picarda, a holy nun, whose story the poet relates. The second heaven is the planet Mercury, where he meets with the Emperor Justinian, with whom he enters into conversation, and who kindly offers to satisfy his curiosity with regard to whatever he may desire to know, relating to the seoond heaven. The third heaven is the planet Venus. The fourth heaven is the Sup, where the souls of Thomas Aquinas a Dominican, and Buonaventura, a Franciscan, have found resting places. The former enters into an account of the life and character of St. Francis, while the latter in like manner celebrates the virtues and piety of St. Dominic—an act of courtesy they would scarcely have performed whilst on earth. The fifth heaven is the planet

Mars, where the souls of those who had nobly drawn their swords, and combatted for the true faith against the infidels of the holy land, are rewarded. Here Dante encounters one of his ancestors, Cacciaguido, who speaks of the simple manners of his countrymen in his day, when Florence

> Was chaste and sober and abode in peace.

He predicts the exile of our poet, and exhorts him to write his poem. The sixth heaven is Jupiter, where he finds the souls of those who had administered justice rightly in the world, so disposed, as to form the figure of an eagle. Here the poet, who seems to have entertained some doubt, respecting the possibility of salvation without belief in Christ, has the difficulty solved, by being told that

> None ever hath ascended to this realm,
> Who hath not a believer been in Christ,
> Either before or after the blest limbs
> Were nail'd upon the wood. But lo! of those
> Who call 'Christ, Christ,' there shall be many found
> In judgement, further off from him by far,
> Than such to whom his name was never known,
> Christians like these the Ethiop shall condemn:
> When that the two assemblages shall part;
> One rich eternally, the other poor.

The seventh heaven is Saturn, inhabited by the souls of those who had passed their lives in holy contemplation. The eighth heaven, is that of the fixed stars, where the poet sees

> ——————the triumphal hosts
> Of Christ, and all the harvest gather'd in
> Made ripe by these revolving spheres. ——————

He ascends to the ninth heaven, where he is permitted to behold the divine essence. In the tenth heaven he beholds the Virgin Mary, whom St. Bernard supplicates, that our poet may have grace given him to contemplate the divine majesty, which being granted,

> ——————Reck'ning smil'd the sage,
> That I should look aloft; but ere he bade,
> Already of myself aloft I look'd;
> For visual strength, repining more and more,
> Bare me into the ray authentical
> Of sov'reign light ——————
> Such keeness from the living ray I met.

That, if mine eyes had turn'd away, methinks,
I had been lost; but, so emboldened, on
I pass'd, as I remember, till my view
Hover'd the brink of dread infinitude.

Ibid, Par. Can. xxxiii.

He thus describes the Trinity:

——— In that abyss
Of radiance, clear and lofty, seem'd methought,
Three orbs of triple hue, clipt in one bound:
And, from another, one reflected seem'd,
As rainbow is from rainbow: and the third
Seem'd fire, breath'd equally from both.———

Ibid.

The foregoing extracts from the great poem of Dante, will afford the reader who is unacquainted with his works, some idea of the style and manner of a poet who stood alone in his age,—whose poem was formed after no existing model, but was the sole product of an active, vigorous, and original mind. "It stands alone" says an elegant writer and judicious critic,"* as the first monument of modern genius, the first great work that appeared in the reviving literature of Europe. In its composition, it is strictly conformable to the essential and invariable principles of the poetical art. It possesses unity of design and of execution, and bears the visible impression of a mighty genius, capable of embracing at once, the parts and the whole of its scheme; of employing with facility, the most stupendous materials, and of observing all the required niceties of proportion, without experiencing any difficulty from the constraint. In all other respects, the power of Dante is not within the jurisdiction of established rules. It cannot with propriety be referred to any particular class of composition, and its author is only to be judged by those laws which he thought proper to impose upon himself."

The minor pieces of Dante, consist principally of sonnets, a species of composition for a long time peculiar to Italian poetry, and which is still a favorite mode of composition in that language. Of his sonnets, we present the following written after the death of Beatrice, translated by Carey.

Ah, pilgrims! ye, that happy musing, go,
On aught save that which on your road ye meet
From land so distant, tell me, I intreat,

* Sismondi. Lit. South of Eur. Vol. i. 210.

Come ye, as by your mein and looks ye show?
Why mourn ye not, as through these gates of wo,
Ye wend along our city's midmost street,
Even like those who nothing seem to meet
What chance hath fall'n, why she is grieving so?
If ye to listen but awhile would stay,
Well knows this heart, which inly sigheth sore,
That ye would then pass, weeping on your way.
Oh hear; her Beatrice is no more;
And words there are a man of her might say
Would make a stranger's eye that loss deplore.

Contemporary with Dante was *Petrarch* or *Petrarco*, who was born at Arezzo, in Tuscany, A. D. 1304, and at the death of Dante, was seventeen years of age. Petrarch was intended by his father for the law, and having passed through the necessary preparatory studies, he was sent to Bologna, there to enter upon its study, but instead of applying himself to the law, Petrarch was more frequently found dallying with the muses, or turning over the pages of elegant literature. When spoken to on his neglect of a profession which was calculated to lead him to honor and riches, he answered, that he "could not deprave his mind by such a system of chicanery, as the present forms of law exhibited." This neglect of his legal studies, induced his father to visit Bologna, to snatch him from the seductive influence of poetry. Petrarch, on the arrival of his father, attempted to conceal his favorite manuscripts of Cicero, Virgil and others; his father, however, found them and threw them into the fire, but moved by the distress of his son, he saved from the flames Virgil and Cicero, which he presented him, saying, "Take them, my son! here is Virgil, who shall console you for what you have lost; here is Cicero, who shall prepare you for the study of the laws." After this Petrarch endeavoured to gratify the wishes of his father, but he was unable to conquer his repugnance to law.

Among the professors at Bologna were two of the best poets of that time. One was Cicro de Pistoia, the other Cicco de Ascoli. The former was professor of law; the latter of philosophy and astrology. These two poets, instead of opposing, cultivated the taste of Petrarch for poetry. Cicco de Ascoli, the astrologer, was burnt at Florence A. D. 1327, as a soccrer, by the tribunal of the inquisition.

In 1325 Petrarch lost his mother, and the year following, his

father; he then left Bologna with his brother Gerard, and settled at Avignon, then the seat of the Roman Pontiff. The embarrassed state in which they found the affairs of their father, induced the brothers to embrace the ecclesiastical profession. Petrarch soon became distinguished by his brilliant talents and his studious habits, and attracted the notice of John of Florence, canon of Pisa, who looked upon him as his son, assisted him with his advice, and comforted him in his various afflictions. Here also commenced his acquaintance with the family of Colonna, to whose patronage and friendship he was indebted for his prosperity in after life, and which he ever remembered with gratitude. This friendship commenced with James Colonna, a young man about his own age, who studied law at Bologna, when Petrarch was dividing his time between law and poetry.

The year 1327 formed a new epoch in the history of Petrarch, and that ardent passion took possession of him, that seems to have had such an effect upon his future life. It was in that year he first saw Laura, whose charms inspired him with the most romantic ideas, and gave life and inspiration to some of the most sublime flights of his muse. His description of her person and appearance is such as none but a poetic fancy could describe; "her face, her air, her gait, were something more than mortal. Her person was delicate, her eyes tender and sparkling, and her eyebrows black as ebony. Golden locks waved over her shoulders, whiter than snow; and the ringlets were interwoven with the fingers of love. Her neck was well formed, and her complexion animated by the tints of nature, which art vainly attempts to imitate. When she opened her mouth, you perceived the beauty of pearls and the sweetness of roses. She was full of graces. Nothing was so soft as her looks, so modest as her carriage, so touching as the sound of her voice. An air of gaiety and tenderness breathed around her, but so pure and highly tempered, as to inspire every beholder with sentiments of virtue; for she was chaste as the spangled dew-drop of the morn."

Of Laura various opinions have been entertained, as well as to what concerns her family and condition in life, as to whether she was a married or single woman, at the time Petrarch first saw her. Some, indeed, have carried their scepticism so far as to doubt her very existence, as they have doubted that of Be-

atrice, to whom the sonnets of Dante were principally addressed, regarding her as a mere creature of the poet's imagination. There appears, however, no good reasons for such a supposition; but, on the contrary, every reason to believe she was a real person, and the wife of Hugues de Sade, son of Paul, one of the syndics of the city of Avignon. A passion such as that which appears to have influenced Petrarch, and controlled almost every action of his life, cannot be defended upon any principle of morals, when we remember that its object was a chaste and virtuous married woman, and it is of so unusual a character, that we are inclined to believe there was more of affectation than reality in it. Be it real or affected, to this devotion to Laura, the world is indebted for those poetic effusions, which have gained him so great a reputation, and which so brilliantly distinguished the age in which he lived. The poetry of Petrarch, particularly his sonnets, is remarkable for its elegant and flowing style, and its purity of language. The greatest fault of his sonnets consists in too much of sickly whining about love and Laura—a too frequent recurrence to the same object, and a consequent repetition of the same ideas. The image of Laura had taken such firm possession of his mind, that long after he had passed the meridian of life, when passion is usually sobered into reason, he declared that "she appeared in every object and was heard in every breeze."

The bishopric of Lombes becoming vacant, pope John XXII conferred it upon James Colonna, the friend of Petrarch. The new bishop, when about to take possession of his see, invited Petrarch to accompany him. Lombes is situated at the foot of the Pyrenees, near the source of the Garonne. The manners of its inhabitants were rude and uncultivated, and directly opposed to the refined manners of Avignon. Thither the bishop retired, together with Petrarch and two or three other friends. Petrarch accepted the invitation as well from inclination, as from a disposition to comply with what he conceived to be his duty to his friend. At Lombes, Petrarch passed the summer and autumn, where he pursued his studies with unabated ardor. He was much devoted to the study of the literature of the Romans, and in order to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the works of her poets, orators and historians, he spared neither pains nor expense in collecting manuscripts. The collection of

manuscripts was of itself, a laborious undertaking, as they were so scarce, that to read the works of Cicero, it was necessary to travel from province to province, some books being preserved in one, and some in another. The destruction of the works of ancient writers, who had shed so much glory on their country, not only caused the deep regrets of Petrarch, but excited his indignation even against the innocent descendants of the barbarians, whose inroads caused this destruction.

Petrarch travelled through France, Germany and Italy, where he spent some time in informing himself of the manners, customs and institutions of those countries respectively, and in examining the public and private libraries. Soon after his return to Avignon, he retired to Vaucluse, a romantic retreat about fifteen miles distant. Here he remained several years, devoting himself entirely to literary pursuits, and the collection of valuable manuscripts, and to his exertions modern literature is indebted for the preservation of many valuable remains of ancient learning, which, had they fallen into other hands, might never have benefited or delighted posterity. In this retreat he composed some of his most valuable works; among others he composed a Latin epic poem, entitled "Africa," celebrating the glorious achievements and heroic virtues of Scipio Africanus, the conqueror of Hannibal and Carthage. On this epic Petrarch rested his claims to immortality, regarding his lighter poems as productions which would soon be forgotten; his anticipations, however, have not been realized; his "Africa" is now almost forgotten, whilst his sonnets constitute the chief memorial of his literary fame.

As a poet Petrarch attained to such distinction, that on the same day the laureat's crown was offered him by the senate of Rome, and the university of Paris. After consulting his friend Cardinal Colonna, he determined to accept the dignity of poet laureat from the Roman senate, and be crowned in the capital of the christian world. The ceremony took place in April, 1341, and is thus described: "The assembly was convoked early in the morning on easter day, which happened to be very serene, and favorable to the solemnity. The trumpets sounded; the people, eager to view a ceremony which had been discontinued for so many years, ran in crowds to behold it. The streets were strewed with flowers, and the windows filled with ladies dressed

in the most sumptuous manner, who sprinkled as much perfumed waters on the poet as would serve for a year in the kingdom of Spain. Petrarch appeared at last in the capitol, preceded by twelve young men in scarlet habits. These were chosen out of the first families of Rome, and recited his verses; while he, adorned with the robe of state which the king of Naples had given him, followed, in the midst of six of the principal citizens clothed in green, with crowns of flowers on their heads; after whom came the senator,* accompanied by the first men of the council. When he was seated in his place, Petrarch made a short harangue upon a verse drawn from Virgil: after which, having cried three times, 'Long live the people of Rome! Long live the Senator! God preserve them in liberty!' he kneeled down before the senator, who, after a short discourse, took from his head a crown of laurel, and put it upon Petrarch's, saying 'This crown is the reward of merit.' Then Petrarch recited a fine sonnet on the heroes of Rome." When the ceremony in the capitol was ended, Petrarch was conducted with the same retinue to the church of St. Peter, where, after a solemn mass, and returning thanks to God for the honor he had received, he took off his crown to place it among the offerings, and hung it up on the arch of the temple.† This was a proud and glorious day in the life of Petrarch, as no individual had been so honored, for more than a thousand years.

The public coronation of Petrarch in the Roman capitol, with the laureat's crown, spread his fame far and wide, and wherever he travelled, he was not only an object of curiosity to the idle, but was greeted by the refined and polished portion of society, with all the enthusiasm that genius is calculated to inspire. Among the numerous instances of enthusiastic devotion which are related, we will mention one. A schoolmaster of Pontremoli, old, and blind, travelled on foot, conducted by his son, from Pontremoli to Naples, from Naples to Rome and from Rome to Parma, for the sole purpose, as he said, of *seeing* him, and, when introduced to Petrarch, he gave himself up to the most excessive transports. He remained three days at Parma, following him wherever he went, listening with delight to every word that fell

* Orso, count of Anguillara, held that high office when Petrarch arrived at Rome.

† Dobson's Life of Petrarch, vol. 1, book III.

from his lips He returned to his home highly gratified, with the result of his long and toilsome journey.

A few years after the ceremony we have described, the happiness of Petrarch received a severe shock in the death of Laura, and his patron and friend the cardinal Colonna, whom he thus pathetically laments in an address to Death: "Thou hast taken from me the two treasures which were my joy and my confidence; that stately column which served me for support, and that green laurel under whose care my weary soul reposed! nothing can restore to me what I have lost. What remains for me, but to bemoan, all my future days, such irreparable losses? Our life is like the shadow of the sun passing over the plain. We lose in one moment what we have been years in acquiring."

Petrarch lived to the advanced age of seventy years, enjoying the friendship of the most illustrious men of his time. His death took place July 18th, 1374—he was found dead in his library, one arm leaning on a book. His death caused a general grief, and throughout Italy was heard the exclamation, "the father of letters is no more; the light of our age is extinguished." People came from all quarters, to do honor to the memory of him who had been the greatest ornament of their country, since the days of Augustus.

We have said that although Petrarch himself rested his fame upon his poem of "Africa," he is remembered only for his sonnets, which are remarkable for delicacy of sentiment and elegance of style. For these powerful evidences of transcendant genius, we are indebted to his real or affected passion for Laura. There was nothing low or grovelling in his passion—ever present to his thoughts, she inspired him with the most delicate and refined ideas, and filled his imagination with the most pleasing images.

The sonnet has ever been a great favorite with the Italians, particularly since the time of Petrarch, who may be considered as the father of the sonnet. It is true it was known before his time; sonnets were composed by the Provencal and Sicilian poets, and we have seen that Dante sometimes forgot the gloomy horrors of his *Inferno*, and indited sonnets in praise of Beatrice. Of all the kinds of poetic composition in which poets have indulged, the sonnet is, perhaps, the most difficult, being confined to a certain number of lines or verses—the legitimate number being fourteen. It is "essentially musical and essentially founded

upon the harmony of sound, from which its name is derived. It acts upon the mind rather through the words than by the thoughts. The richness and fulness of the rhymes constitute a portion of its grace, and the return of the same sounds makes a more powerful impression, in proportion to their repetition and completeness." The peculiar style of versification employed in the sonnet, is, however, rather unpleasing to the unpracticed ear, but when once it becomes familiar, it has all the beauty and harmony of the most polished verse. This beauty and harmony of versification in the sonnet seems particularly to belong to the Italian, and may arise from the peculiar construction of the soft and sonorous language of Tuscany, which is better adapted to the sonnet than any other, either ancient or modern. In the English and French sonnets, there is evidently much more labor—there appears to be a constant effort and exertion to produce effect, unlike the easy and flowing style of the Italian. We will here introduce one in each language respectively, that a judgment of the merits of each may be formed. The first is by Petrarch, and is one of those exquisite and feeling productions, in which he pours forth the emotions of his soul on the death of Laura:

Gli occhi, di ch'io parlai si caldamente,
E le braccia et le mani, e i piedi, e'l viso,
Che m'havean si da me stesso diviso,
E fatto singular da l'altra gente;
Le crespe chiome d' or puro lucente,
E'l lampeggiar de l' angelico riso,
Che solean far in terra un paradiso,
Poca polvere son che nulla sente.
Ed io pur vivo: onde mi doglio e sdegno,
Rimaso o senza 'l lume, ch' amai tanto,
In gran fortune, e'n disarmato legno.
Or sia qui fine al mio amoroso canto:
Secca e la vena de l' usato ingegno,
E la citera mia rivolta in pianto.

The following is from the pen of Maynard, a French poet of considerable reputation in the age of Louis XVI. He was well known as a writer of satires, epigrams and sonnets, which were usually written in a style of great purity and elegance. Having addressed some verses to Cardinal Richelieu, in a style of courtly flattery, of which the cardinal took no notice, Maynard addressed to him the following sonnet, which shews that if he

could employ the language of flattery, when it suited his purposes, he could also dart with some effect the arrow of satire.

Par votre humeur le monde est gouverné:
  Vos volontés font le calme et l'orage;
Et vous riez de me voir confiné,
  Loin de la cour, dans mon petit village.
Cléomédon, mes désirs sont contens,
  Je trouve beau le désert où j'habite,
Et connais bien qu'il faut céder au temps,
  Fuir l'éclat et devenir ermite.
Je suis heureux de veiller sans emploi,
De me cacher, de vivre tout à moi,
  D'avoir dompté la crainte et l'esperance;
Et, si le Ciel, qui me traite si bien,
  Avait pitie de vous et de la France,
Votre bonheur serait égal au mien.

The following sonnet on the departure of the nightingale, breathes such a spirit of tenderness, and is clothed in language of so much beauty, that we present it as favorable specimen of English sonnet writing. It is the production of Mrs. Charlotte Smith, a highly gifted lady, whose sonnets are not only deservedly admired, but have placed her at the head of English poets, in that particular species of composition:

Sweet poet of the woods, a long adieu!
  Farewell, soft minstrel of the early year!
Ah! 't will be long e'er thou shalt sing anew,
  And pour thy music on the night's dull ear.
Whether on Spring thy wandering flights await,
  Or whether silent in our groves you dwell,
The pensive muse shall own thee for her mate,
  And still protect the song she loves so well.
With cautious step, the love-born youth shall glide
  Thro' the lone brake that sheds thy mossy nest;
And shepherd girls, from eyes profane, shall hide
  The gentle bird, who sings of pity best:
For still thy voice shall soft affections move,
And still be dear to sorrow and to love!

In the foregoing examples of the Italian, French and English sonnets, there is a manifest difference—the most striking, perhaps, is the number of verses in the Italian of similar terminations, which are thought to constitute their chief beauty. This peculiarity arises from the fact, that in the Italian language, almost all the syllables are simple, and formed from a few letters, so that it has a greater number of words of similar terminations.

As we remarked above, although Petrarch himself rested his hopes of future fame upon his "Africa" and his other Latin works, on which he bestowed much time and labor, his sonnets at the present day constitute the chief memorial of his fame. On these elegant productions he bestowed much care, and never suffered one to appear unless it reached his standard of criticism. He had in view in his Italian verses, a continuation of that improvement of the language which had been begun by Dante, and in consequence of his efforts and these of his contemporary Boccacio, it attained the standard of perfection. By the care of these learned and distinguished men—these brilliant lights of the fourteenth century, "more exact rules were introduced; a crowd of barbarous words were rejected; the nobler were separated from the more vulgar expressions; the latter were excluded forever from the language of verse, and poetry became more elegant, more melodious and more pleasing to the ear of taste."

The greater number of the sonnets of Petrarch composed during the lifetime of Laura, are addressed directly to her in praise of her beauty and virtue, and those high qualities of mind and person which his glowing fancy pictured, and those written after her death, have continual allusions to the loss he had sustained. The following beautiful sonnet was written by Petrarch after Laura was considerably advanced in life, and her beauty began to fade. It shows with what fervency the poet loved, or fancied he loved, and how much his thoughts dwelt upon the object of his affections.

Waved to the winds were those long locks of gold,
Which in a thousand burnish'd ringlets flow'd,
And the sweet light, beyond all measure, glow'd,
Of those fair eyes, which I no more behold;
Nor (so it seem'd) that face, ought harsh or cold
To me (if true or false, I know not) show'd:
Me, in whose breast the amorous lure abode,
If flames conceiv'd, what marvel to unfold?
That step of hers was of no mortal guise,
But of angelic nature, and her tongue
Had other utterance than of human sounds;
A living sun, a spirit of the skies,
I saw her—now, perhaps, not so.—But wounds
Heal not, for that the bow is since unstrung.

Roscoe.

With the following sonnet in which the writer repents having

missapplied in his youth the talents with which he was gifted, we will conclude our notice of Petrarch.

Still do I weep the days that are gone by,
When sublunary things my fondness sway'd,
And no bold flight, though having wings, I made.
Haply to give me examples high.
Then, who my impious, foul misdeeds dost spy,
Dread Lord of heaven immortal, viewless! aid
The soul that's frail, that has from duty stray'd;
And its defect O let thy grace supply!
Thus if life's warfare, and its storm I prov'd,
Peace, and a harbour may in death be mine:
Though vain my stay, I'll worthily depart.
For that short period ere I'm hence remov'd,
And at the last, extend thy hand divine:
Thou know'st, that thou alone giv'st hope unto my heart.

Anon.

Contemporary with Petrarch was the celebrated Italian poet and novelist *Boccacio*, who was born at Certaldo in Tuscany, A. D. 1313, from which circumstance he is sometimes called *John of Certaldo*. He was placed early in life with a merchant of Florence, with the view of being educated to mercantile pursuits, but his taste for poetry and belles letters, getting the better of his desire for gain, he was dismissed from his employment for negligence. He then began the study of the canon law, with a view to ecclesiastical preferment, but here again his taste for elegant literature prevailed, and after making several attempts in other pursuits, the chief end of which was money, with the consent of his father he determined to devote himself to the cultivation of literature. About this time a favorable opportunity presented itself of acquiring the Greek language, the knowledge of which was then confined to very few, not more it is said than half a dozen persons in Italy, being acquainted with even its rudiments. Boccacio acquired a sufficient knowledge of the language, to enable him to relish its beauties, and in order to make himself acquainted with all the learning of the times, he fixed his residence for a time at Naples, where learning flourished under the patronage of king Robert. After spending several years at Naples he returned to Florence, where he remained but a short time, in consequence of the troubles in which that city was involved, by the strife of opposing parties. He spent several years in visiting different parts of Italy, until tranquility was restored, when he returned to his native country. After his

return to Florence he filled several public offices, and was appointed the first lecturer on the *Divina Comedia* of Dante. He died at Cataldo on the 21st December 1375, in the sixty second year of his age.

To Dante, Petrarch and Boccacio, Italian literature is indebted for its fame in the fourteenth century, and to them the Italian language owes its refinement; indeed, they may be said to have fixed the language, and may be considered the fathers of learning and literary taste in modern times. In this illustrious triumvirate of genius and learning Boccacio occupies a distinguished place. He was the author of many works in prose and poetry, but after having read the sonnets of Petrarch, he is said to have become so dissatisfied with his own, that he committed them to the flames. As Dante had his Beatrice, and Petrarch his Laura, so had Boccacio his Famietta, under which name he celebrated Maria, the natural daughter of Robert, king of Naples. Most of his sonnets were addressed to Maria under the name of Famietta, who was the wife of a distinguished nobleman of the court of Robert. The intercourse between Boccacio and this lady, does not appear to have been of that pure and platonic character, that distinguished the love of Petrarch. Brought up in a corrupt court, she had but little delicacy of sentiment, and returned the passion of Boccacio in a manner not entirely consistent with the character of a wife.

The most celebrated of his works, and that to which he is mainly indebted for his fame, is the *Decameron*, a collection of tales or novels, supposed to have been recited by a party of gentlemen and ladies, who had retired to the country in the year 1348, when a dreadful pestilence infected the city. It was agreed that each person, during the space of ten days, should narrate daily, a fresh story, and as the company consisted of ten persons, the number of stories amounted to one hundred. In these stories the manners of the times are brought to view, and illustrated by the skill with which he describes the customs of society. He lashes with great severity the absurdities and corruptions of the church, while the priests and monks are held up to ridicule and contempt. Being perfectly acquainted with their numerous vices, and the profligacy of their lives, he let no opportunity escape of exposing them in their true colors. In order that our readers who are not in possession of the work its-

elf, may form some idea of the style and manner of Boccaccio as a moralist, we present one of his stories, in which "a plain honest man, by a jest accidentally let fall very wittily reproves the hypocricy of the clergy." The lady by whom it is related, after a few preparatory remarks, continues:

"There was, not long since, in our city, a friar belonging to the inquisition, who, though he laboured much to appear righteous and zealous for the Christian faith, yet was he a much better inquisitor after such as had full purses, than those who held heterodox opinions. By which great care of his, he soon found out a person better stored with money than sense."

"This man, not so much out of profaneness as want of thought, and perhaps overheated with liquor into the bargain, unluckily said to one of his companions, that he had better wine than Christ himself had ever drank; which being reported to the inquisitor, and he understanding the man's estate was large, and that he was full of money, sent all his myrmidons, had him seized and commenced a process, not so much with a design of awarding him in matters of faith, as to ease him of part of his money, as he soon did."

"The man being brought before him, he inquired whether it was true what had been alleged against him; and the poor man immediately answered, that it was and told him in what manner the words were spoken. To whom the most holy inquisitor (devoted to St. John with the golden beard) replied: "What! dost thou make Christ a drunkard, and curious in the choice of wines, like your common sots and frequenters of taverns? and now wouldst excuse it as a small matter? And so it may seem to thee; but I tell thee, should I proceed with the rigor of justice, thou wouldst be burnt alive for it." With these and such like words, as if he had to do with a downright atheist, he so terrified the poor wretch, that he was forced to have recourse to a little of St. John's golden grease (a most sovereign remedy against the pestilential avarice of the clergy, especially of the lesser friars, who are forbidden the use of money, although it be not mentioned by Galen in his book of medicines,) with which he anointed his hands to such purpose, that the fire and faggot with which he had been threatened, were changed into a cross; which, being yellow and black, seemed like a banner designed for the holy land. The money being paid, he was to stay there

for some time, being ordered, by way of penance, to hear mass of the holy cross every morning, to visit him also at dinner time, and to do nothing the rest of the day but what he commanded; all which he performed punctually: and one morning it happened, that during mass, the gospel was read, wherein were these words; "you shall receive an hundred for one, and so possess eternal life," which he kept thoroughly in his mind, and being come, at dinner time, the inquisitor asked him, whether he had heard mass that morning. "Yes, sir," replied the man very readily. "Hast thou heard any thing therein," quoth the inquisitor, "wherein thou art doubtful, or desirous to ask any questions?" "No, surely," said the honest man, "and believe all that I have heard most steadfastly; only one thing I remember, which occasions great pity in me, for you and the rest of the brethren, as to what will become of you in the other world." "And what are those words," replied the other, "which make you pity us so much?" "O good sir," said the man, "do you remember the words of the gospel, you shall receive a hundred for one?" "Well, what of them?" quoth the inquisitor. "I will tell you, sir" continued he: "ever since I have been here, I have seen sometimes one, and sometimes two great chaldrons of broth, given out of your great abundance every day to the poor, after you and your brethren have been sufficiently regaled; and now, if for every one of these you are to receive an hundred, you will all be drowned in broth!" This set the whole table a laughing, and the inquisitor was quite confounded, knowing it to be a satire upon their great hypocricy; and were it not that he had been much blamed for his former prosecution, he would have given him more trouble: he ordered him, therefore, in a rage, to go about his business, and to come near him no more."

Boccacio was the author of many other works in Italian, besides the Decameron, amongst which is a romance entitled "Famietta," in which a noble lady of Naples, relates her adventures; also another entitled "Filocopo," formed upon the model of the romances so captivating when chivalry was at its height. These two romances, although possessing considerable merit are entirely overshadowed by the celebrity of the Decameron. He was the author also of two epic poems, neither of which obtained any great reputation in their day, and are now nearly forgotten. They are written in *ottarima*, or stanza of eight lines, of

which he was the inventor. His Latin compositions were also numerous, and some of them useful and interesting—he wrote in Latin an abridgment of the Roman history from Romulus to the year of Rome 724, with a parallel of the seven kings of Rome.

To Boccacio was Italy principally indebted for the introduction of a knowledge of the Greek language. In 1360, Leontius Pilatus, a distinguished Greek scholar arrived at Venice, where Boccacio then was, on his way to Avignon. Boccacio sought his friendship and prevailed on him to settle at Florence, where by his influence the Florentine government founded a professorship of the Greek language and literature. Boccacio himself, although at that time forty-seven years of age, became one of his scholars, and under his instructions studied the works of Homer, and afterwards in conjunction with him translated the Illiad and Odyssey into Latin, by which means the west obtained a better knowledge of Homer than they previously possessed. Leontius remained at Florence four years, when he determined to visit his native land, notwithstanding the earnest solicitations of his scholars that he should not leave them. On his arrival in Greece, finding it almost desolated by the Turks, and his countrymen enduring the heaviest calamities, he set sail for Italy, but the vessel being overtaken by a violent tempest, Leontius seized hold of a mast, and was unfortunately killed by lightning. In the death of this man literature sustained a heavy loss. Boccacio was not a little proud of his efforts in the cause of Greek literature, and in his treatise on the "Genealogy of the Gods," he says that it was by his advice that Leontius was induced to turn from the Babylon of the west, and settle in Florence—that he received him into his house, where he long enjoyed his hospitality—that he labored with all the zeal of friendship to procure his admission among the doctors of the Florentine academy, and that he obtained for him a salary from the public treasury. The friendship of Boccacio for Leontius and the zeal with which he promoted his interests, affords sufficient evidence if any were wanting, of his devotion to the cause of learning. Indeed, succeeding ages are more indebted to Boccacio and his illustrious contemporary Petrarch, than is generally known. They felt such admiration for the history, poetry and philosophy of ancient Greece and Rome, that they incurred great expense in their search after ancient manuscripts, and devoted their lives to

the study of such as were recovered from the dust of ages. N'oublions pas vous-mêmes ces obligations," says Sismondi, "et rendons grâce à Boccace, à l'université, à la république Florentine, de ce que les livres d'Homére sont parvenus jusqu'á nous; de ce que la langue du pere despoètes est devenue familière dans notre Europe; de ce qu'enfin les vertus et les monumens de l'antiquité, le patriotisme de Sparte et les artes d'Athènes, l'eloquence, la poesie, la philosophie, le souvenir de la liberté et de la grandeur d'ame des Grecs, sont restés a notre portée, et peuvent encore élever notre âme, former notre génie, ou échauffer notre cœur."*

At this time also lived *Geoffrey Chaucer* and *John Gower*, English poets of great celebrity. *Chaucer*, who is called "the morning star of English poetry," was born in London in the year 1328. Of his early years but little is known with certainty. He appears, however, to have attracted the notice of Edward III, by whom he was appointed comptroller of the customs of wool, and it also appears that he accompanied his warlike sovereign in his invasion of France A. D. 1359. He afterwards received a pension from the king of twenty marks per annum, equal to two or three hundred pounds of modern money, but what particular service occasioned this exertion of royal bounty does not clearly appear. Chaucer also attracted the notice of John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, whose ambition induced him to court the assistance of learned men, and to purchase that of Chaucer by many offices of favor and friendship. Chaucer married Philippa, the sister of Catharine Rouet, one of the duke's favorites, after which the duke used his influence in promoting his interests. He procured him the appointment of *Scutifer*, or shield-bearer to the king, and subsequently that of ambassador to Genoa. Having discharged his duty in his embassy to Genoa with fidelity, he was sent with two others on a mission to France, for the purpose of negotiating a marriage betwen a daughter of the French king, and Richard, prince of Wales.

Chaucer was one of the followers of Wickliffe, and in consequence was obliged to fly his country and seek refuge in France. He remained abroad until he thought the storm had blown over, when he returned to England. He was, however, seized and sent to the tower, where he continued in confinement until he consented to disclose all he knew of the designs of the Wick-

* Sismondi. Hist. des Rep. Ital. tome 6, 162.

liffites, and of the disturbances that took place when John Comberton, a noted follower of Wickliffe, was proposed, a second time, for lord mayor of London. Notwithstanding his treason to his friends, he was deprived of his revenues, and retired to Woodstock, where he composed his "Canterbury Tales," or at least begun them. In 1389, by the influence of the duke of Lancaster, he was restored to royal favor, and an annuity of forty marks. He died 25th October, 1400, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Before the time of Chaucer, poetry was in a very rude state in England, scarcely deserving the name. "He is called the father of English poetry, not because he was the first Englishman who wrote in verse, but because he was the first who wrote poetically. Extensive learning and minute detail were, in his time, the qualities which entitled a writer to fame; and it was the fashion to write very long and very profound treatises in verse. There was no distinction between the rules of poetry and those of history; and writers, instead of attempting flights of the imagination endeavored to give a faithful enumeration of particulars. Chaucer was the first to emancipate himself from this servility, but even he did not completely emancipate himself."* His earliest production, entitled the "Court of Love," was written when he was about eighteen years of age. It is an allegorical poem, in which the poet supposes himself summoned to the court of love on Mount Citheron—he is there introduced to a mistress, and sworn to observe the twenty statutes of the God, some of which he objects to on account of his inability to perform them. Whatever merit this and the other poems of Chaucer, may possess, it is difficult to discover, because of the obsolete and almost unintelligible language in which they are composed. The following description of the life of lovers is from the "Court of Love:"

This is the life of joy that we ben in,
Resembling life of heavenly paradise;
Love is the elixir aye of life and sin,
Love maketh hertis lustie to devise.
Honor and grace have they in every wise,
That ben to lov is law obedient,
Love maketh folke benigne and diligent,
Aye styning them to dread in vice and shame;

* Life of Chaucer by Sanford.

In their degree it maketh them honorable,
And sweet it is of love to hear the name.
So that his love be faithful, true and stable.

His most celebrated work, that upon which his fame chiefly rests, is his "Canterbury Tales." The plan of this work is borrowed from the *Decameron* of Boccacio, and is simply this; a number of travellers are going on a pilgrimage to Canterbury, and who agree, in order to beguile the tediousness of the journey, to tell stories on the way, with an agreement, that the one who tells the best story should have a supper at the common expense on his return. The prologue describes the different characters who had determined to journey together;

Of sundry folk, by adventure yfalle
In felawship, and pilgrimes were they alle,
That toward Canterbury wolden ride.

This company embraces the different grades into which society was then divided, and each is minutely described. Of his manner take the following description of the knight:

A knight there was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the time that he firste began
To riden out, he loved chivalrie,
Trouthe and honor, fredom and curtesie.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto had he ridden, no man ferre,
As well in christindom as in Hethenesse,
And ever honored for his worthinesse.
At Alisandre he was when it was wonne,
Ful often time he had the borde begonne
Above all nations in Pruce,
In Lettowe hadde he reysed and in Ruce.
No christen man so ofte of his degree,
In Gernade at the siege eke hadde he be
Of Algesir, and ridden in Belmarie,
At Leyes was he, and at Satalie,
When they were wonne; and in the Grete see
At many a noble armee had he be,
At mortale battailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for our faith at Tramissene
In listesthries, and ay slain his fo.

We have given the foregoing extracts from Chaucer, in order that our readers may form some idea of the style and manner of the oldest English poet, and of the language in which he wrote. Although he has been called the "architect of English versification," it may be said that his beauties may be compared

to flowers which we collect in a long journey, numerous in the sum, but collected widely asunder," and that in his works, "although there is much to reward the patience of the reader, there is also something to exercise it."

John Gower was the intimate friend of Chaucer, and is supposed to have been born a short time before him, but in what part of the island of Britain is uncertain, for while one antiquary asserts that he was born in Kent, another says he was born in Wales. Gower wrote several works in Latin, among others one entitled "*Vox Clamantis*," in which he gives an account of a popular insurrection in the reign of Richard II. As Petrarch rested his fame on his "Africa," so did Gower think that he had established a solid claim to immortality by his "Vox Clamantis," but it is his "Confessio Amantis," written in his native language, that has the highest claims, and entitles its author to rank among English poets. It is said to have been written at the request of Richard II. "The general subject of this poem is love, but the author has contrived to write about almost every thing else. Nearly all the ancient literature and mythology are interwoven with what is called the confession of a lover; and it would, at first sight, appear really astonishing, that, at a time when books could only be multiplied by transcription, an author should think of drawing out such an endless string of verse upon so trite a series of subjects." Although Gower possessed considerable talent in the art of versification, he falls short of his countryman and contemporary Chaucer. His subjects are not managed with the same skill, and being more tedious and prolix in their details, are frequently dull and uninteresting, even to those to whom his obsolete language is perfectly familiar. Of his style and manner, the following extract on "detraction," will afford a sufficient specimen. It is taken from his poem "Confessio Amantis:"

Tonehend as of envious brood
I wote not one of all good.
But netheless such as thei bee
Yet there is one and that is hee,
Which cleped is Detraction,
And to confirme his action,
He hath withholde Malebouche,
Whose tongue nother pill ne crouche
Maie hire, so that he pronounce
A pleine good worde without fraunce.

Where behynde a man's back
For though he preise, he fint some lacke,
Which of his tale is ay the lasle,
That all the price shall ouercaste.
And though there be no cause why;
Yet will he iangle, not for thy
As he whiche hath the herauldie
Of hem, that vsen for to lie.

Among the poets of the period under review, we cannot in justice, omit mentioning James I, king of Scotland, the most learned and accomplished prince of the age. He was the son of Robert III, king of Scotland, who intended that he should be educated at the court of France, then closely united with that of Scotland by political ties. For that purpose he set sail from Scotland for France, but was unfortunately taken and carried to England, where he was unjustly detained a prisoner by Henry IV and Henry V, for thirteen years. This event happened in the year 1405, when James was about thirteen years of age. He was first confined in the Tower, then in the castle of Nottingham, and subsequently in the castle of Windsor. The English monarchs made some amends for their injustice by causing him to be instructed in the learning of the times, and employed for that purpose the best teachers in all the arts and sciences. In his confinement his greatest pleasure was derived from books, and he applied himself with so much diligence to his studies, that when released from captivity, he was the most learned man of his age. He was a universal scholar—a perfect master of grammar, rhetoric, poetry, music, natural philosophy, and was skilled in divinity and law. With such varied accomplishments, and superior talents, had his lot been cast in happier times, he would have adorned the throne of his fathers; he would have softened the rugged features of his native land, and became one of its greatest benefactors. But, his acquirements were in advance of his country, and in his attempts to ameliorate the condition of his subjects by restraining the power of the nobles, he became their victim. "It was the misfortune of James," says the celebrated historian of Scotland, "that his maxims and manners were too refined for the age in which he lived. Happy! had he reigned in a kingdom more civilized; his love of peace, of justice, and of elegance, would have rendered his schemes successful; and, instead of perishing, because he attempted too

much, a grateful people would have applauded and seconded his efforts to reform and improve them."*

During his confinement in England, James composed many poems, nearly all of which have been lost. From a perusal of those that remain, it will be seen that he possessed the true spirit of poetry, and the inspiration of genius. This poetic talent served to relieve the ennui of his confinement, during which he composed a poem entitled the "King's Quair," in which he frequently bewails his unhappy fate

Qwhare as in ward full oft I wold bewaille
My dedely lyf, full of peyne and penance,
Saing syt thus, qwhat have I gilt to faille
My freedome in this warld, and my pleasance?
Sin every weight has thereof suffisance.
Bewailing in my chamber thus allone,
Dispeired of all joye and remedye,
For-tirit of my thot, and wo-begone
And to the wyndow gan I walke in hye,
To see the warld, and folk that went forbye,
As for the tyme, though I of mirthis fade
Myt have no more, to luke it did me gude.

One of our highly gifted countrymen, has devoted a chapter of his "Sketch Book," to the memory of the illustrious, but unfortunate James, in which he has pronounced a just eulogium on his merits as a scholar and a poet. "Others," says he in the conclusion of his spirited sketch, "may speak of the illustrious deeds of James, as a warrior and a legislator; but I have delighted to view him as the benefactor of the human heart, stooping from his high estate to sow the sweet flowers of poetry and song in the paths of common life. He did all in his power to soften and refine the spirit of his countrymen. He wrote many poems which are now lost to the world. He improved the national music; and traces of his tender and elegant taste, may be found in those witching airs still piped among the wild mountains and lonely glens of Scotland. He has embalmed his memory in song, and floated it down to after ages, in the rich stream of Scottish melody."†

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries flourished a number of English historians and civilians, some of whose names have been rescued from the oblivion that was the fate of others.

* Robertson's Hist. of Scot. vol. 1, 179.
† Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.

But even these were not remarkable either for elegance of style or perspicuity of narration; they have recorded many facts which constitute important links in the chain of history, but many of these are so disfigured with ridiculous stories of visions, miracles and portentous appearances, that it is difficult in many cases to separate truth from falsehood. These historians, like most of their predecessors, were monks, who held but little intercourse with the great world before them—they mingled but little with the moving mass of population, and were thus incapable of properly appreciating the motives, that gave rise to some of the most important events. Their histories then, were little more than a mere record of facts—a dry and uninteresting detail. We will, however, take a brief notice of a few of those who excited some attention in their day, and whose works are worth remembering. The best historian of the early part of the fourteenth century, is *Thomas Walsingham*, a monk of St. Albans. His historical works are more full and satisfactory than that of the other annalists of those times, and contain a narrative of many important events in the civil and religious history of the country, no where else to be found. He was the author of two works which have rescued his name from the oblivion that awaited many of his contemporaries; one is entitled "A history of England," beginning at the 57th year of the reign of Henry III, A. D. 1273, and concludes with the death of Henry V and the appointment of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester to the regency A. D. 1422; the other is a history of Normandy from the beginning of the tenth century, to the year 1418, in which he introduces an account of the affairs of England, as connected with that important duchy. He dedicated the latter work to king Henry V, and informs his majesty that he composed it expressly to put him on his guard against the intrigues and perfidy of the court of France.

Thomas Otterbourne, a Franciscan friar, composed a history of England, from the landing of Brutus the Trojan to A. D. 1420. This work is a compilation from the works of preceding historians. *Thomas de Elmham*, prior of Linton, wrote a history of the reign of Henry V, which contains some valuable information with regard to that monarch, and the events of his reign. It is entitled to the more credit, as he was contemporary with Henry, and was an eye witness to many of the events he records. A history of

Henry was also written by an Italian, who visited England, and was protected by Humphrey duke of Gloucester, who was a munificent patron of learned men. This work is an epitome of the history of Thomas de Elmham, but much improved by leaving out some things that were trifling and unimportant, and adding others of more consequence. The work is written in Latin, and is a professed imitation of the style of Livy, whose name he assumed.

Contemporary with some of the writers above mentioned was *Sir John Fortescue*, famous for his knowledge of the civil and common law. He was the third son of Sir Henry Fortescue, lord chief justice of Ireland, and at a proper age was entered a student in Lincoln's-Inn, where he was so diligent in the prosecution of his studies, that on being admitted to the bar, he soon acquired great reputation, and was appointed chief justice of the king's bench, A. D. 1442. Previous to his time the nature of the constitution of England was but little understood, even by men the most learned in the law. For the instruction of Edward, prince of Wales, son of Henry VI, he composed a treatise entitled "De Laudibus Legum Angliæ," in which he shews that the government of England, by its constitution, is a limited and not an absolute monarchy. This work is highly esteemed by English lawyers for the soundness of its political doctrines, and the justness of its views on matters that deeply interested the monarch and his subjects. Sir John was taken prisoner in the battle of Tewksbury, which decided the fate of queen Margaret and her son. Edward IV, in a short time restored him to liberty and received him into favour. Although he acknowledged the title of Edward to the crown, he still entertained the same opinions with regard to the interpretation of the constitution, and wrote a treatise on the difference between an absolute and limited monarcy, which was not printed until A. D. 1714. This treatise was written for the use of Edward IV, and is valuable in modern times on account of the many curious particulars it contains concerning the constitution of England, and the condition of its inhabitants—it is an extraordinary work, when we consider the period at which it was written, and "affords full evidence of the learning, wisdom, uprightness, public spirit and loyal gratitude of its author, as any that is extant in ours, or in any modern language."

In the reigns of Henry VI and Edward IV, also flourished the *Earl of Worcester*, who early distinguished himself for his love of learning, and his desire, notwithstanding the troubles of the times, to promote the cause of literature and science. His love of learning induced him to quit his native land, for the purpose of visiting the seats of learning in Italy, then more renowned than those of any other country of Europe. Literature was then enjoying the protection of the illustrious house of Medici, which stands first upon the rolls of literary fame in modern times. The example and influence of the members of this munificent family, had extended the pride of learning beyond the walls of Florence, and at Padua, the earl remained sometime conversing with learned doctors, and storing his mind with useful knowledge. During his residence in Italy he visited Rome where he attracted the notice of Pius II, better known in the literary world under the name of Æneas Sylvius, who pronounced the flattering compliment, that "he was the only prince of the times, who, for virtue and eloquence could be justly compared to the most excellent emperors of Greece and Rome." As an author the earl of Worcester does not occupy a very elevated rank; his principal writings consisted of translations from the works of the ancients. His chief claim to notice in this sketch arises from the ardour with which he sought to acquire knowledge himself, and the zeal with which he engaged in the collection of books, a considerable amount of which he presented to the university of Oxford. He became involved in the troubles which convulsed his country and was beheaded A. D. 1470.

Although we have seen learning diffusing its blessings over England by means of its universities and other seminaries, the youth of the neighboring kingdom of Scotland possessed none of the advantages to be derived from such sources, until after the beginning of the fifteenth century. We have already taken notice of several learned men, who were natives of Scotland, but they were indebted for their knowledge to more favored regions. The history of that country presents for many centuries nothing but a series of internal wars—of bloody contests between rival chieftains, or between the throne and powerful and turbulent nobles. A state of society so distracted and divided, presented barriers almost insurmountable, to the cultivation of intellect and the march of mind. At length about the year 1410, a few

men of learning associated together for the purpose of lecturing gratuitously to those who chose to attend their lectures, and thus laid the foundation of the university of St. Andrews, which was subsequently confirmed and established by virtue of a charter from Henry Wardlaw, bishop of St. Andrews, "constituting and declaring it to be a university, for the study of divinity, law, medicine, and the liberal arts." This university possessed all the powers, privileges and immunities, possessed by other similar institutions, and soon became conspicuous as a seat of learning. It flourished exceedingly under the patronage of the learned and liberal James I, who rewarded the professors with many marks of favor. The following ordinance for the government of its members, shews, that however learned, they were not remarkable for the purity of their lives; "We ordain further, that all the members of the said college live decently, as becomes ecclesiastics; that they do not keep concubines publicly; that they be not common night-walkers or robbers, or habitually guilty of other notorious crimes; and if any one of them is so (which God forbid,) let him be corrected by his superior, and if he proves incorrigible, let him be deprived by the same superior, and another substituted in his place." Lamentable indeed, is this picture of the Scottish clergy! of those who may be considered as the *elite* of the order, and to whom was assigned the care of improving the minds, as well as guarding the morals, of the youth of the land!

The succes which attended the establishment of the university of St. Andrews, induced the foundation of a similar institution at Glasgow. By the influence of William Turnbull, bishop of Glasgow, James II, applied to pope Nicholas V, who issued a bull, dated 26th December A. D. 1450, establishing a university at Glasgow, with all the powers and privileges usually appertaining to such institutions, James II in 1453, took it under his special patronage and protection, and exempted the professors and scholars from all taxes, and in 1459, it received a valuable donation from James, Lord Hamilton, and his wife the countess of Douglas, for which the members of the college were to perform certain prescribed religious rites, for the benefit of the souls of the donors. These two universities after the revival of learning, and the invention of the art of printing, long flour-

and sent forth many men who have adorned their coun-
, and shed a lustre on these seats of learning.*

CHAPTER XX.

Of the revival of learning in the fifteenth century.

We have now arrived at that period of our history when the rays of literature and science began to spread abroad with increased effulgence—when learning protected and encouraged by liberal and enlightened men, aided by the invaluable discovery of the art of printing, began to diffuse its blessings over a benighted world.

During the long period of darkness and ignorance in the west, literature still maintained some footing in the eastern empire, but when that portion of Europe fell before the victorious crescent of Mahomet, although a deplorable event in her history, it contributed to the advancement of literature in the west. In the year 1387, *Emmanuel Chrysoloras*, a learned Greek, being sent on an embassy to implore the aid of the Christian princes of Europe against the Turks, visited the different cities of Italy, and revived that taste for the Greek language and Grecian literature, which had declined after the death of Boccacio. After the taking of Constantinople by Mahomet A. D. 1453, many learned Greeks sought refuge in Italy, and found protection in the house of Medici.

This illustrious family had been long established at Florence, and from simple merchants, attained to the first honors of the republic. Their commercial transactions were extensive, and their wealth unbounded, so that it was amply in their power to give that protection to letters which so eminently distinguished Cosmo, Lorenzo and Leo the Tenth. The first distinguished patron of learning in this family was Cosmo de' Medici, the son

* Henry's Hist. of Gr. Britain. Mosh. Eccl. hist. Sismondi Lit. of the South of Eur. Sismondi Hist. des Rep. Ital. Carey's Dante. Dobson Petr. Boc. Decam.

of Giovanni de' Medici, who had been honored by his fellow-citizens of Florence with the highest offices, as a reward for integrity, affability and moderation, and his liberal munificence. Cosmo early took part in the affairs of the government, and soon acquired considerable influence, not only by reason of his immense wealth, but those endowments and qualifications which fitted him in an eminent degree for the duties of government. After having for some time filled the chief office of the republic, with advantage to his country, Rinaldo de' Albizi having obtained the chief power, procured his banishment from Florence for ten years. This event happened A. D. 1433. Cosmo employed the period of his banishment, in visiting different parts of Italy, noting whatever was worth observation, and in collecting manuscripts. The power of his enemies continued about a year, at the end of which time Cosmo was recalled from banishment, and for the remainder of his life enjoyed almost uninterrupted prosperity. He was thus enabled to gratify his own wishes in the encouragement of learning, and the promotion of its interests. He devoted those hours not engaged in public business, to the acquirement of knowledge in every branch of learning, and was always surrounded by learned men. Poggio, one of the distinguished scholars of the times, and who enjoyed the confidence of Cosmo, addressing him says, "devoted to the study of letters from your early years, you have by your example given additional splendor to science itself. Although involved in the weightier concerns of state, and unable to devote a great part of your time to books, yet you have found constant satisfaction in the society of those learned men who have always frequented your house." Previous to the arrival of the learned Greeks, to whom we have alluded, the philosophy of Aristotle was the favorite system, and had many powerful advocates—other systems were but partially known. In the time of Cosmo, a Greek named Pletho, a disciple of the Platonic school, delivered lectures unfolding and explaining the philosophy of his master. He propagated his opinions with so much zeal and success, that a wonderful reformation was soon wrought, and Plato towered above Aristotle. Cosmo himself attended the lectures of Pletho and was so charmed with the doctrines of the "divine Plato," that he formed the design of founding a Platonic academy at Florence. For this purpose he caused *Ficinus*, the son of his

first physician, to be carefully instructed in the doctrines of his favorite system, and in the language of Greece, that he might be able to translate into Latin the most celebrated productions of the Platonists. The acquirements of Ficinus answered all his expectations, and he translated into Latin such of the works of Plato as he could procure, and those of Plotinus and others. By means of these translations the Platonic system became more extensively known, and a warm controversy arose between the disciples of Aristotle and Plato, with regard to the merits of their respective systems, which contributed in no small degree to enlarge the mind and promote the cause of science.

The example of Cosmo and those enlightened men by whom he was surrounded, created an earnest desire in others to recover from the dust of ages, the works of ancient writers, and men of wealth exerted themselves in this pursuit, sparing neither pains or expense. By these means valuable manuscripts of Greek and Roman writers were rescued from obscure corners where they had lain for ages, and were on the point of falling a prey to the ravages of time and the ignorance of those in whose possession they were. The discovery of an ancient manuscript, says Roscoe in his life of Lorenzo de' Medici, was regarded as almost equivalent to the conquest of a kingdom. With such patrons as Cosmo and his associates, and such enthusiasm in its cause, learning could not be otherwise than in a flourishing condition. But, while the learned were thus engaged in the search of the remains of ancient literature and science, and neglected the composition of original works, it may be asked whether the cause of learning was benefited? Some, perhaps, may be disposed to say, that it would have redounded more to its literary reputation, had the learned men of the age transmitted to posterity more of the fruit of their studies—that it would have marked more distinctly the progress and effect of the learning of the times. At first sight this appears plausible enough, and will strike with some force, but a little reflection upon the literary condition of the world previous to this time, which we have in the foregoing pages endeavored to portray, will convince, that their labors were more beneficially employed for mankind, in the search for, and preservation of, the works of the ancient Greek and Roman writers, than they could have been in their closets, pouring over and committing to writing, the

crude ideas and erroneous opinions in philosophy, science and religion, that prevailed antecedent to this period. By their labors they have restored to us the inestimable works of men, whose names will never be forgotten, while learning is cherished, or wisdom held in estimation—and upon whose inestimable productions modern genius has erected its proudest memorials of literary fame. Without their efforts, those works, in all human probability, would have been lost, and the long catalogue of philosophers, historians and poets, which now dazzles by its lustre, would not have been in existence—for it can be easily demonstrated, that almost all our knowledge may be traced to this prolific fountain.

Among the distinguished men of this period is *Poggio Bracciolini*. He was born in the year 1381, of a noble family of Florence, and having passed many years of his early life in travelling through the different countries of Europe for the improvement of his mind, he at length settled at Rome, where he served eight successive pontiffs, in the capacity of secretary. In 1452, he was invited to Florence, where he remained until his death. Poggio was a voluminous author, and is generally admired for the unaffected and simple style of his writings, but some of his tales are rather licentious, and are censurable for their indecency of language. He seems to have been an enemy of the clergy, and to have frequently indulged in bitter satire upon their vicious and profligate course of life. He appears to have devoted himself, under the patronage of Cosmo, with great diligence to the collection of manuscripts, and was remarkably successful in his exertions. "The number of manuscripts discovered by him in different parts of Europe, during the space of near fifty years, will remain a lasting proof of his perseverance, and his sagacity in these pursuits. Whilst he attended the council of Constance in the year 1415, he took an opportunity of visiting the convent of Saint Gallo, distant from the city about twenty miles, where he had been informed that it was probable he might find some manuscripts of the ancient Roman writers. In this place he had the happiness to discover a complete copy of Quintillian, whose works had before appeared only in a mutilated and imperfect state. At the same time he found the three first books, and part of the fourth, of the Argonautics of Valerius,

Flaccus."* These works were buried in the obscurity of a dark and lonely tower, covered with filth and rubbish, and their destruction seemed inevitable. From a similar condition were many other manuscripts rescued by his persevering zeal.

Besides *Poggio*, there were several others whose exertions were used in the same way. Some of these zealous and enterprising men, visited Constantinople, and other parts of the eastern empire, where their labors were rewarded by the discovery and acquisition of valuable works, in the various departments of ancient literature and science. One of these adventurers† was unfortunately lost on his return to Italy, with a valuable collection of books which he had rescued from the cells of monasteries, to be swallowed up in the mighty deep; another‡ more fortunate arrived at Venice, A. D. 1423, with two hundred and thirty-eight manuscripts, amongst which were all the works of Plato, Proclus, Plotinus, Lucian, Xenophon, the histories of Arrain, Dio, and Diodorus Siculus, the geography of Strabo, the poems of Callimachus, Pindar, Oppian and Orpheus. *Francesco Filelfo*, also contributed greatly to the diffusion of knowledge by the great number of manuscripts he collected in Constantinople between the years 1420 and 1427, when he returned to Italy. He was greatly favored in his researches by the aid received from John Chrysoloras, a learned Greek, whose daughter he married. Filelfo was employed at different times after his return to Italy, as a professor in most of the celebrated seminaries of learning, but possessing an unhappy disposition, his efforts in communicating information to his scholars, were not very successful. His unhappy temper of mind kept him constantly engaged in quarrels, and he is even said to have conspired against the life of his patron and benefactor, Cosmo de' Medici. As a writer, Filelfo holds a very respectable station, having written on almost every branch of literature.‖

After having, by the aid of the distinguished persons mentioned, and his agents and factors in the Levant, become possessed of a large and valuable collection of books, Cosmo de' Medici founded at Florence a library, which became the constant object of his care. Under his grand-son, Lorenzo, this library

* Roscoe's Lor. de' Medici, vol. 1, 36.

† Guarino Veronese, the first native Italian who publicly taught Greek in Italy.

‡ Giovanni Aurispa. ‖ Roscoe's Life of Lorenzo de' Medici.

was greatly increased, by the addition of many rare and valuable works. Soon after the foundation of the Medicean library, Niccolo Niccoli, a wealthy citizen of Florence, founded a library for the use of the public, but on his death it was discovered that he was much in debt, and that his liberal design would be frustrated from the embarrassed state of his affairs; Cosmo agreed to pay the debts of Niccolo, on condition that his executors would place his library at his disposal, which being agreed to, he deposited the books in the monastery of St. Mark for public use, thereby fulfilling the intentions of the original proprietor. About this time also pope Nicholas V founded the library of the Vatican, now one of the most valuable and extensive libraries in the world.

About this time was invented that most useful art—"the art preservative of all arts"—the art of printing, from which incalculable blessings have flowed. Previous to this important discovery all books were in manuscript, and as the process by which copies were multiplied was tedious and laborious, so was it expensive. None but the wealthiest class could purchase a book—to the humbler portion of the community the luxury of a book was denied, and hence it was that learning was confined to a few, and the people in general were ignorant. But when books came to be multiplied with so much ease, and at so trifling an expense, learning was brought to the door of every man, and the son of a peasant became as distinguished in the walks of literature and science, as the son of the proudest peer. A vast number of valuable books, have by this means been preserved that, notwithstanding the pains and expense in collecting them, might have been totally and irrecoverably lost. The honor of giving birth to this invention has been disputed by several cities. Strasburgh claims it for John Guttemburg; Mentz for John Fust or Faust, and Haarlem for John Koster. This dispute is unimportant, and its decision a matter of no interest, except so far as the gratification of curiosity. It is sufficient that the art of printing by means of moveable types has been discovered by one of the individuals above-mentioned, and we are now enjoying the benefits resulting from the discovery. This invention was for a time kept a profound secret, but it was of too much importance to remain so long, and printing presses were soon established in different parts of Europe, from which issued large

editions of the best Greek and Roman writers, and the works of modern authors written in their native tongue. The first book printed with moveable types, was a copy of the bible, which made its appearance between the years 1450 and 1452.

On the first day of August, A. D. 1464, the cause of literature met with a great loss in its munificent patron Cosmo de' Medici. His character exhibits a combination of virtues and endowments, rarely to be found united in the same person. He was remarkable for his magnificence in public, as well as for his prudence in private life. Although sustaining the high character of chief of the republic of Florence, his deportment was divested of all ostentation, and neither in his retinue, his friendships, or his conversation, could he be distinguished from any other respectable citizen. He well knew the jealous temper of the Florentines, and was careful to avoid every thing that could excite their jealousy. Among the literary men by whom he was surrounded, his virtues and his liberality were the most frequent topic of conversation. In every event of his life they were ready to attend him, to participate with him in his prosperity, and to sympathise with him in his misfortunes—so much was he beloved by those who had the best opportunities of knowing him.*

Cosmo left one son, Piero, who succeeded him in his wealth and honors, but whose feeble health gave but little promise of a prosperous life. Although inferior to his father in intellectual accomplishments, as well as vigor of body, Piero gave sufficient evidence of his attachment to the cause of letters, by his patronage of learned men, and the care with which he caused his son Lorenzo to be educated. Lorenzo was about sixteen years of age when his grandfather died, and had then given strong indications of those extraordinary talents, which subsequently reflected so much lustre upon his native land. Under the instruction of Gentile d' Urbino, afterwards bishop of Arezzo, he received the first rudiments of his education, and was afterwards under the instructions of other eminent teachers, among whom was Landino, who had been appointed to the office of public professor of rhetoric and poetry. He became proficient in the Greek language, and was intimately conversant with the Aristotelian and Platonic systems of philosophy; he possessed a fine

* Roscoe's Life of Lorenzo de' Medici. vol. 1, p. 68—83,

taste for poetry, and has left behind him some exquisite productions, of which the following sonnet may be taken as a specimen:

Oimè, che belle lagrime fur quelle
Che'l nembo di disio stillando mosse!
Quando il guisto dolor che'l cor percosse,
Sali poi su nell' amorose stelle!
Rigavon per la delicata pelle
Le bianche guancie dolcemente rosse,
Come chiar rio faria, che'n prato fosse
Fior bianchi, e rossi, le lagrime belle;
Lieto amor stava in l'amorosa pioggia,
Com' uccel dopo il sol, bramate tanto,
Lieto riceve rugiadose stille.
Poi piangendo in quelli occhi ov' egli alloggia,
Facea del bello e doloroso pianto,
Visibilimente uscir dolce faville,

Ah! pearly drops, that pouring from those eyes
Spoke the dissolving cloud of soft desire!
What time cold sorrow chill'd the genial fire,
"Struck the fair urn and bade the waters rise."
Soft down those cheeks, where native crimson vies
With ivory whiteness, see the chrystals throng;
As some clear river winds its stream along,
Bathing the flowers of pale and purple dies.
Whilst Love, rejoicing in the amorous shower
Stands like some bird, that after sultry heats
Enjoys the drops, and shakes his glittering wings;
Then grasps his bolt, and, conscious of his power
Midst those bright orbs assumes his wonted seat
And through the lucid shower his living lightning flings.

Roscoe.

Lorenzo possed a versatility of poetic talent, and such facility of composition, that it was a mere amusement to him; he attempted all kinds of poetic composition, and his sonnets which were numerous, are not, in general, unworthy of Petrarch himself. His writings afforded many striking instances of the genuine inspiration of poetry, and a brilliant imagination. The following description of jealousy will not suffer by a comparison with the poetry of his most celebrated contemporaries, or even with that of more modern poets.

Solo una vecchia in un oscuro canto,
Pallida, il sol fuggendo, si sedea,
Tacita sospirando, ed un ammanto
D'un incerto color cangiante havea:
Cento occhi ha in testa, e tutti versan pianto
E cent' orecchie la maligna dea:
Quel ch'è, quel che non è, trista ode e vede.
Mai dorme, ed ostinata a se sol crede

Sad in a nook obscure, and sighing deep,
A pale and haggard beldam shrinks from view;
Her gloomy vigils there she loves to keep,
Wrapt in a robe of ever-changing hue;
A hundred eyes she has, that ceaseless weep,
A hundred ears that pay attention due.
Imagin'd evils aggravate her grief,
Heedless of sleep, and stubborn to relief.

Roscoe.

The foregoing extracts will suffice to give some idea of the poetical genius and talents of Lorenzo. As a patron of learning the name of *Lorenzo the magnificent* stands high on the rolls of fame; contemporary writers have sounded his praises, and their successors have echoed the notes. He followed the example of his illustrious grandsire—no niggardly calculations of expence, ever staid his hand for a moment, when the interests of learning were to be advanced, and hence during his lifetime, it flourished in a very great degree, and not only Florence, but all Italy abounded with learned men; a notice of two or three of them will bring our sketches to a close.

Politiano, who was born on the 24th July 1454, applied himself to the study of those branches of learning which occupied the attention of the scholars of the times. He gave early indications of a talent for poetry, in the composition of Latin and Greek epigrams, which attracted the notice of his teachers and procured their commendation. A tournament given in honor of the marriage of Braccio Martello, afforded Politiano an opportunity of making a display of his talents, which introduced him to the particular notice of Lorenzo. In this tournament Julian de' Medici was the victor, and Politiano produced a poem entitled the *Giostra of Giuliano de' Medici*, a wonderful production for a youth but little more than fourteen years of age. The poet represents Julian in the flower of his age, devoted to the brilliant career of manly exercises, aspiring after glory and contemning the shafts of love. A single extract, in which he adverts to his repugnance to surrender his heart to the attacks of the fair. will afford a favorable specimen of the style and manner of the youthful poet.

Ah quante Ninfe per lui sospirorno!
Ma fu si altero sempre il giovinetto,
Che mai le Ninfe amanti lo piegorno,
Mai poti riscaldarsi 'l freddo petto.

Facea sovente pe' boschi soggiorno;
Incolto sempre, e rigido in aspetto;
Il volto diffendea dal solar raggio
Con ghirlanda di pino, O verde faggio.

For Julian many a maiden heav'd the sigh,
And many a glance the tender flame confest,
But not the radiance of the brightest eye
Could melt the icy rigor of his breast.
Wide thro' the trackless woods the youth would hie,
Serene of aspect and disdaining rest:
Whilst the dark pine, or spreading beach supplied
A wreath, from summer suns his head to hide.

Roscoe.

Politiano undoubtedly possessed a fine genius with a highly gifted and cultivated mind, but it seems to us that he possessed all the waywardness of genius, and that he wanted that steadiness of purpose which conducts to eminence. The poem from which the foregoing beautiful extract is taken, was never finished. He seems to have abandoned his native tongue, and wasted his talents in dry philosophical discussions, or on poems written in Latin, which were understood only by the learned. Had he confined himself to the cultivation of poetry in his own sonorous language, he might have rivaled the fame of Petrarch or Dante.

Luigi Pulci was also a native of Florence, the contemporary of Politiano, and his rival in literary renown. He was the youngest of three brothers, to all of whom the nymphs of Parnassus had shewn special favor. The tournament already mentioned, which gave occasion to the poem of Politiano produced one from Pulci, entitled the *Giostra of Lorenzo de' Medici*, written in his twentieth year. By those who are intimately acquainted with Italian poetry, it is considered as much inferior both in language and interest to that of his rival. It gives a minute account of the exhibition, describing all the preparations for the combat, and the personal appearance of the combatants. The following account of the attack of Lorenzo on Benedetto Salutati, may be justly placed alongside any passage in the poem of Politiano.

Vedestu mai falcon calare a piombo,
E poi spianarsi, e batter forte l'ale,
C'ha tratto fuori della schiera il colombo?
Cosi Lorenzo Benedetto assale;
Tanto che l'aria fa fischiar pel rombo,
Non va si presto folgor, non che strale;

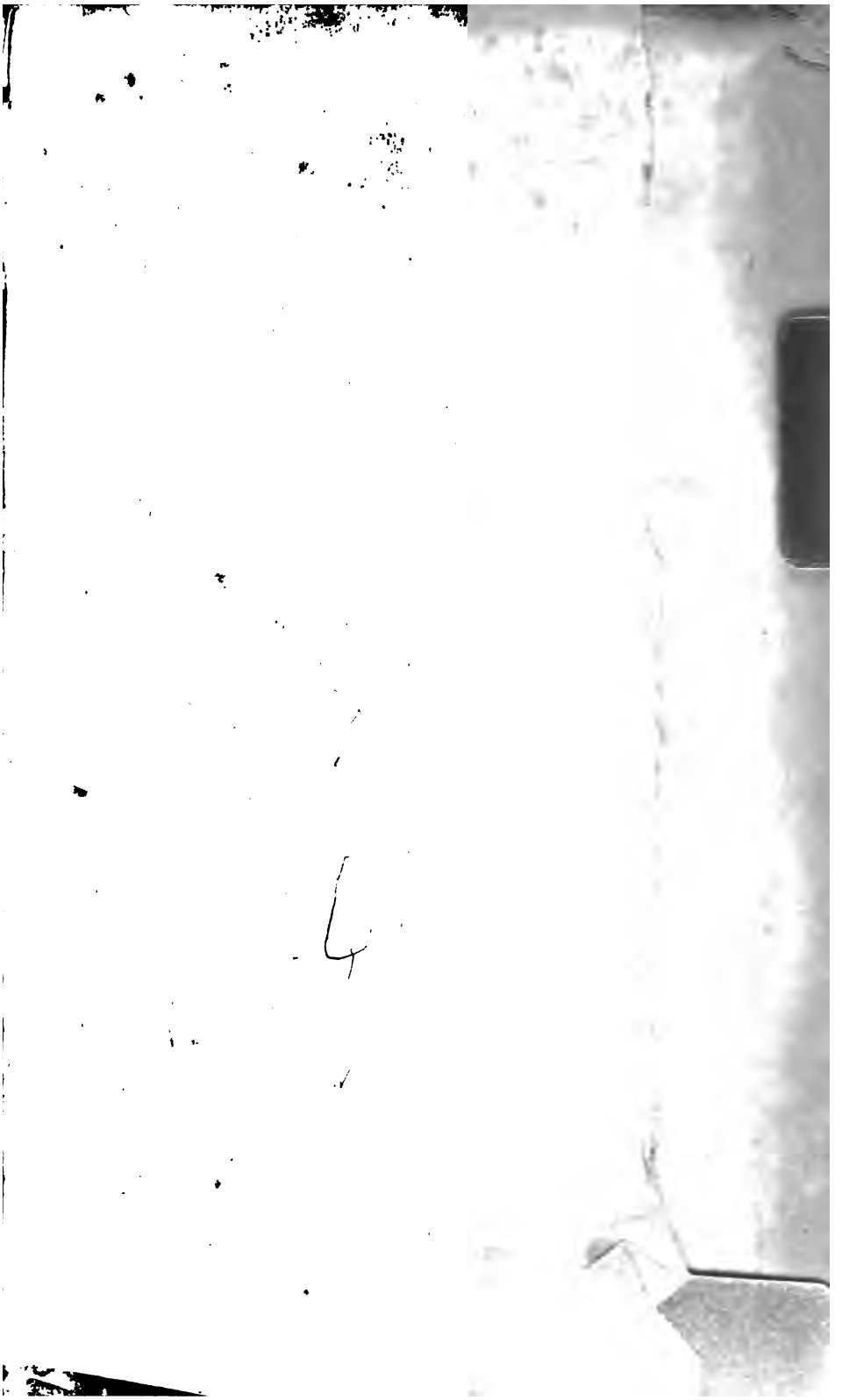
Dettonsi colpi che parvon d'Achille
Et balza un mongibel fuori di faville.

Hast thou not seen the falcon in his flight,
When high in air on balanc'd wing he hung,
On some lone straggler of the covey light?
——On Benedetto thus Lorenzo sprung.
Whistled the air, as ardent for the fight,
Fleet as the arrow flies, he rush'd along;
Achilles' rage their meeting strokes inspires,
Their sparkling armour rivals Etna's fires.

Roscoe.

The *Morgante Maggiore* is considered the principal work of Pulci, and is said to have been written at the particular request of Lucretia, the mother of Lorenzo de' Medici. It consists of twenty-eight cantos, and is founded upon the romances so much admired in the thirteenth century. Its characters are those of the chivalric ages—they fight with and destroy giants, and release captive maidens from the hands of lawless knights. The style employed is sometimes serious and sometimes ludicrous, and the apparent profanity of some of the passages drew upon it the censures of the church, which even in that enlightened age was no trifling matter. Notwithstanding its defects it still occupies a respectable place among the works of Italian poets.

Besides the poets of whom we have just spoken, there were many others well deserving notice; we might also, present a list of accomplished writers in the various departments of literature, who adorned the age in which they lived, and who have consecrated the name of *Lorenzo the magnificent* to immortal honor; but a notice of them and their works, however interesting it might be, would lead us far beyond our original limits, and conduct us into a field of boundless extent. Here then we drop the subject, and submit our work, imperfect as it is, to the decision of a candid public.



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